

# BALI: ENCHANTED ISLE

*A Travel Book*









# BALI: ENCHANTED ISLE















This Balinese *danseuse* carries out every tradition of her art. Her body control is remarkable; her face expresses no emotion whatever as she is supposed to be possessed by spirits during the dance.



# BALI: ENCHANTED ISLE

A TRAVEL BOOK

*by*

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DEDICATED  
TO MY GOOD FRIEND  
LOWELL THOMAS  
AT WHOSE SUGGESTION  
THIS BOOK  
WAS WRITTEN









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## BALI: ENCHANTED ISLE









# BALI: ENCHANTED ISLE

## CHAPTER I

### BALI<sup>1</sup>: ENCHANTED ISLE

BALI, that little fan-shaped island just east of Java on the map of the Dutch East Indies, is half way round the world from New York and a good long way from London.

For centuries Bali has been a forgotten medieval island where sun-bronzed women dress as Eve, a land where nobody hurries, and all is peace. It is a little paradise where men wear flowers in their hair, and strange *gamelan* bells ring at night; a paradise where people live happily without money, without clothes, and without enmity; a paradise where you can buy a little thatched *bale* (house) for a song, and live easily on fruit and sunshine.

The strangest and most beautiful island on earth is very irregular in shape, and its greatest length is but eighty miles. A million natives live in comfort on the eastern half of the island; most of the other half is an impenetrable wilderness of jungles and mountains, still inhabited by tigers.

The farther away a land is, the more intriguing is it to the roving traveller of to-day. Now I'm going to "loop the loop" of the Orient ports and take you to

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced Ba-li to rhyme with our word "holly."



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Bali in a page or two. When you reach Java in the Dutch Indies, Bali is not far beyond. It's only three days from Batavia by a snug little Dutch steamer; and from Sourabaya, the southern metropolis of Java, it is only a twelve-hour trip across the clearest green water I've ever seen—waving fronds of coral and mauve of subterranean gardens float over the white sand floor of the Java Sea.

I found it a fascinating voyage every hour of the way. The water was as limpid as jade, the Dutch captain was jovial, and the beer in thick glass mugs was cold and refreshing.

Before we'd been aboard an hour, I met a most interesting man. I was leaning over the rail, half asleep, watching the ever-changing colour of the luminous water, when a low voice at my elbow said, "I hear you are going to Bali—the Captain tells me it is your first trip there?"

The owner of the voice was a tall, kind-faced man with grey hair and eyes. People travelling in foreign lands these days are more democratic than at home, and chance acquaintances are usually worth making. The gentle graciousness of this quiet-speaking man was entirely disarming.

"Yes, I've always wanted to see Bali, and now I'm actually on my way. We arrive there at dawn, do we not?"

"Six o'clock in the morning. My man will be out in the launch to meet us. We have just returned from a trip to Batavia on business, my wife and I. You



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must meet her; we are always glad to have visitors in our little world. We're a great way from home, you know. We've lived a long time in Singaradja now. We're very happy there. Have you friends in the island?"

"No, but I have several letters—among them one to the Resident there. Do I need letters? I had hoped I could get around by myself, and stay in the native rest-houses I've heard about. Oh, I want to stay a long, long time, and really get the feel of the place."

"That is right; you will not be disappointed. You must see the native temples and the dances at night; if possible, a cremation. My friend, the Rajah of Giangar, will receive you. I may be able to help you in many ways. Perhaps you will come to our home and see my wife's collection of Balinese craftwork. Ah, I must introduce myself . . ."

What a treat Providence handed me; for my new friend proved to be the Resident, the Hon. Caron.

The official Resident of a Dutch possession is the equivalent of a king—in authority. He is the highest ranking official of Bali.

It was a joy to meet someone who knew the island from many years' experience. We talked on deck until dinner-time, when I met his charming wife, Madame Caron, the official "hostess" of Singaradja.

After our good Dutch supper, we returned to the cool of the forward deck. Overhead, the tropic night blossomed with stars. We sat on the open deck, watching the phosphorescence of the waves, while the Carons



talked of the arts and customs and legends of Bali—and I listened.

Early the next morning, our good ship anchored in the stream at Boeleng. The glittering white sand beach fringed with palms typified all the glamorous stories of beach-combers I had ever heard. The coco-palms leaned above the clustered villages of thatched-roofed huts. Beyond, the island rose in a cone of green mountains wreathed in purple mist. The morning air was sweet, and fragrant. Madame Caron, standing on deck beside me, said it was from the *frangipani* blossoms—the pervading perfume of Bali.

I felt I had reached the very end of civilization. There were no factories, no smoke, no clang of machinery. There wasn't even a dock at Boeleng—only a wooden jetty which ran out into the sea from the palm-fringed line of the shore. Small boats called *praus* darted out to meet us, paddled by dark-skinned natives in flowered *sarongs* of *batik* which they wore wound around their hips like a skirt. The upper part of their bodies gleamed in the sun as they dipped their round-tipped paddles in the surf.

In one of the *praus* sat a queenly looking native woman dressed in a bright *baju* (little jacket) of thin silk, fastened up the front with *jewelled* buttons. Her *sarong* was patterned in orchids on a creamy ground. Her thick black hair was twisted into a glossy coil on her neck. She was the only woman to come out to the ship—the first Balinese woman indeed that I had seen—and her handsome costume aroused my admiration.



"That is Princess Patimah," said Madame Caron; "she always comes to greet us. We will take you to her house this afternoon, so that you may see her silver work and weaving." How intriguing these plans sounded.

Princess Patimah came up the rope ladder and bowed low before the Carons, who conversed with her easily in Balinese. Her manner quite plainly showed that Caron was the *tuan besar* (great white man) of Bali. Having lived nearly a year in Java, I had picked up the common language of the tropics—Malay—and already I was finding it useful, for nearly every Balinese understands Malay, though he very rarely knows more than a dozen words of English.

Patimah was a gracious example of a perfect Balinese lady. She had brought a gift of fresh fruit from her garden. And as we talked, she stripped back the citron-coloured peel of a large *pomelo*, or *jeruk besar*. She was very friendly and smiled a great deal; I liked to watch her smile, for she had the whitest teeth. How good that pomelo was; a little like a grapefruit and an orange, but much more delicious, with a honeyed sweetness that made the mouth water.

Soon the official launch made its appearance, chugging away very importantly, and Mak Patimah, as the natives call her, accompanied us to the shore. There she invited us, in turn, to ride in her bright blue *American* motor-car. We whirled away on the trail of adventure, which led to the big white Residency House in Singaradja, the Dutch town beyond the port, and capital of Bali.



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Patimah is called the Silver Queen of the Island. She also has the reputation of being the richest native woman and the best business woman. And yet, she was once doomed to burn to death on the pyre of her royal husband.

*Suttee* used to be the vicious custom of all Hindu races. When the Dutch took possession of Bali, they abolished this hideous medieval rite. Patimah had been married when she was very young to the last Rajah of Kloengkoeng before the Dutch took full control of the island. *Suttee* was still performed secretly when the old Rajah died. A great celebration was prepared in the temples for the moment when Patimah would sacrifice herself on the flaming bier of her dead husband, as her faith required. But this ambitious young woman had a keen desire to live and taste more of the joys of life. With shrewdest calculation, she managed a miraculous escape by running away under cover of the smoke and hiding in the woods. Creeping through the brush all night, she arrived exhausted at the seat of Dutch protection and begged them to save her life. From that time on, the Dutch have been her best friends, and of course now *suttee* is forbidden.

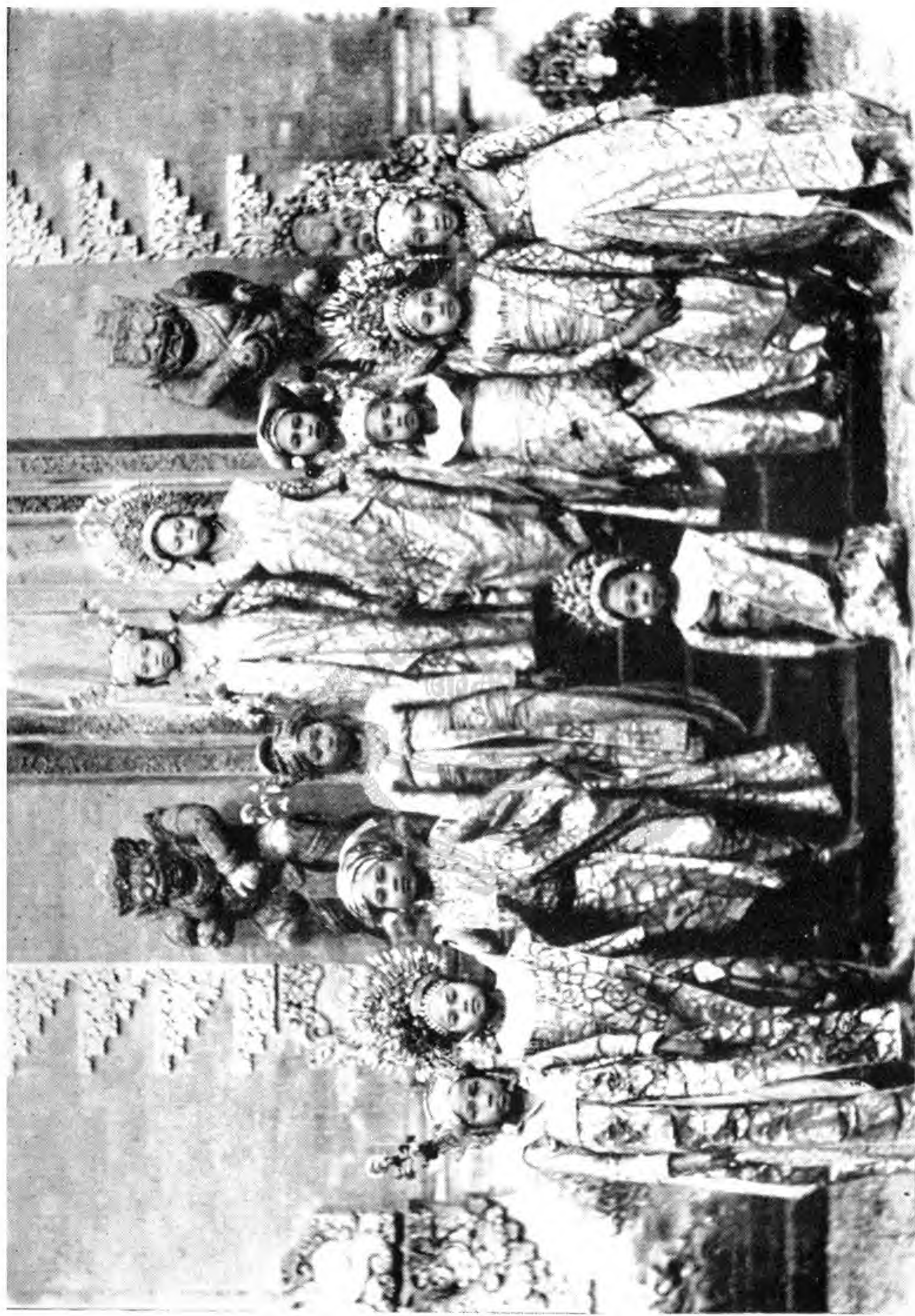
Patimah started life again, married a thrifty Arab, and learned the business of buying and selling. At first, she happened to sell a few of her own silver trinkets when visiting travellers offered her enormous prices for them. Realizing that tourists were a ready market for Balinese handwork, she gathered young men and women craftsmen around her, and developed the silver industry in Singaradja. To-day, it is a thriving





A pair of Balinese *kris*es. The wood of the one on the left is of fine-grained tamarind and the handle is carved like a mythical figure. The wriggly blade has been treated with an acid that eats deep grooves into the metal.





The gold and silver brocaded *kains* of these Balinese temple dancers are so heavily encrusted with metal that they glitter in the torchlight. With their gold and leather headaddresses quivering with flower spikes these grotesque little dancers look like gilded idols out of a temple.



business, and Patimah employs hundreds of workers. As the industry grew, she opened shops and working quarters in different sections of the island. And all her craftsmen were encouraged to use the original designs of their own district.

Now travellers are met at the ships and invited to visit Patimah's workshops to watch the metalworkers hammering reliefs on silver bowls, wine cups, bottle stoppers, etc. Young women weave the true Balinese tapestry in her shaded courtyards. I heard that some of these girls have been adopted by Patimah. She has been the foster-mother of all Balinese women, providing them with better living conditions and standards. She treats her people well, and even builds temples for their services so that they may feel at home in her household.

Her properties have grown until she owns miles of rice lands, besides her shops all over the island. Lately, she has branched out into the automobile business. The Dutch had built five hundred miles of excellent graded roads—so she decided to import a few cars that people might enjoy the roads. An enterprising woman indeed! Tourists were appreciative and remunerative. So Patimah increased her business, and to-day operates a fleet of taxis for visitors. Her chauffeurs are well trained as guides, and understand Malay as well as a little English.

I have never regretted seeing motor-cars about the island. They are a great convenience for getting to the picturesque temples hidden away in almost inaccessible



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places. There are no serviceable horses—only the tiny island ponies, the size of our Shetlands, and these poor little beasts seem to have all they can manage without having to carry tourists over the island.

The last few years, brightly painted Ford busses have appeared, in which the natives ride between villages for a few coppers. How they enjoy riding! It's all very well for a few super-aesthetes to bewail the advent of motor-cars in the East, but these conveyances make life and work easier for the natives as well as for travellers. Actually, the bright-painted Fords, filled with brown-skinned natives in giddy *sarongs*, careening joyfully down the leafy roadways were amusing, I thought. It's all in the way you see things, and whether your viewpoint is altruistic or selfish.





## CHAPTER II

### A NATIVE PRINCESS

IN the afternoon, we went to visit Princess Patimah's household in Singaradja. It was our first glimpse of a native home, and the sight of a regular, white stucco house of square dimensions was somewhat of a disappointment. But Mak Patimah stands in very high esteem with the natives for her magnificent house with its wooden floors and real glass windows.

In the private inner courtyard, she proudly introduced her handsome daughter, who sat cross-legged on the cool ground, before a hand-loom, weaving a red-and-gold *slendang* (a long silk scarf that is worn slung over one shoulder to support a young child).

Across the courtyard, a pair of cocks preened themselves in a fine red cage. Fighting cocks are an important part of every Balinese household.

Beyond the main house, in the workshops, we spent an hour watching the natives making the most original bowls out of dull lumps of metal. These beautiful native articles fairly cry out to one's pocket-book.

In her own house, Patimah showed us a splendid collection of *krises*, the native swords or belt-knives. They were her particular hobby, and I have never seen so many varieties. Some of them had been given to her by Rajahs of the past. The finest ones had black steel blades with handles of hand-beaten gold set with the natural rubies and emeralds of the island. Others





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had handles of carved ivory or wood like grotesque animals. The sheaths in which the blades rested were also of wood, covered with thin gold or copper fretwork. Many of the blades were wicked-looking daggers, some of them wavy like a snake, with wriggly lines etched in the metal by acid.

It was warm in the late afternoon so we rested in the shade of the household courtyard and listened to the shuttles flying back and forth over the looms. Patimah clapped her hands, and a native boy with a head-cloth of *batik* brought us a drink of coconut milk. He had chopped an inch off the head of a green coconut, added a dash of lime juice to the milk inside, and served it in the shell with a wheat straw. A Balinese cocktail! I can't think of a more refreshing drink. Patimah said that he had just picked the nuts from the trees—the natives will only drink fresh coconut milk.

The Balinese have invented countless ways of using coconut in their diet—they roast it, they dry it, and they eat it fresh from the shell. But the men never drink the milk. When I naïvely asked why, I was told that it cools their amorous ardour. When you ask questions here, you sometimes get unexpected answers. Coconut milk is the mainstay of the growing generation, however, and the Balinese ladies drink it for obvious maternal reasons.

Young coconut, eaten fresh from the shell with a native tortoiseshell spoon, is a delicacy I grew very fond of. When the coconut is green, the fruit is a pale



jelly, not yet hardened; but it is considered most nourishing at this stage. Another luscious coconut dainty is an ice cream made of coconut milk and the grated white meat of the ripe nut. This sherbet is frozen ambrosia on a warm afternoon.

Coconuts are the easiest things to grow in Bali. I was told that the natives simply hang a ripe nut in the air to sprout. When the new shoot begins to grow, the nut is then planted in a hole in the ground on top of a handful of salt. That's all there is to it—except to wait for six or seven years until the tree is large enough to bear fruit.

While I had been visiting Patimah, Mr. Caron, with his "open sesame" prerogative, had made arrangements for me to stay at various *pasangrahans*. There are no hotels in Bali except the one recently built in Den Pasar by the K.P.M. Steamship Line, but the small Government "rest-houses" (called *pasangrahans* by the natives), originally built to accommodate visiting Dutch officials, are open to visitors. They are surprisingly comfortable, but small, and only furnish room for five or six guests at a time; so it is well to make arrangements ahead, especially in the smaller villages. A native "*mandoer*" or headman is in charge of each rest-house, and all necessary conveniences are arranged by him. While the accommodations are simple, everything is clean and wholesome and the prices are extremely reasonable.

It is possible to make arrangements ahead for your visit, while you are still in Sourabaya, but I did not



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know this. I could not have fallen into better hands than those of the Carons, however, for I was treated most graciously. Every traveller I've met agrees with me that hospitality is one of the charms of the island.

I had expected to find great heat in Bali, as the island lies very near the Equator. But the mornings and nights are cool, and even the heat of midday does not seem to beat down on one as it does in other parts of the Orient. As Bali is completely surrounded by water, there is always a breeze from the sea over the land. The chill mountain air, drawn down through the valleys covered with damp forests, keeps the atmosphere cool in the lowlands. Yet Bali lies in the real tropics.

I was thrilled with the colour everywhere! The flaming red and orange crowns of tree blossoms contrast sharply with the purple mountains beyond. On the beach, the dense sapphire of the Java Sea is edged with the jagged green of palms. The natives, resplendent with their burnished skins and gorgeous *sarongs*, hold their own against the brilliance of nature.

Fortunately, I had found two other travellers to share the expense of Patimah's car. So, early the next morning, we were off in the blue chariot, which was shined and polished to perfection by our jubilant chauffeur. We made good time over the excellent Dutch roads, craning our necks to see the beauty on all sides. The roads are a surprise to travellers; they are well built and hard surfaced—no wonder the Dutch are proud of the five hundred miles of roadway they



have built in Bali. In the old days, one could travel only on a slow-jogging pony over the hills. This might be sport for a day or so, but hardly good going for several weeks. So we appreciated those good roads.

Every few miles, we came to long lines of the compound walls arched overhead with a roof of tree-tops. Several compounds mean a small village. Out would dash the black and yellow spotted dogs, barking furiously to announce us to the whole village. But the natives of Bali, unlike the Chinese, display little interest in foreigners. We were far more curious about their customs than they seemed to be in ours.

A compound is a little community in itself. Each family lives within its own compound, enclosed in high mud walls, and guarded by live dogs—or stone ones which I saw at many gateways. I also noticed that some of the walls were spiked along the top with jagged glass pieces stuck in the mortar. “Do they have thieves here?” I asked, pointing to this obvious and wicked protection.

“Oh, no—that only to keep out bad spirit,” said our chauffeur, wisely.

So this was a land where spirits climbed walls. It sounded very mysterious. I wanted to have a look at one of the compounds, so we stopped at a place where the chauffeur had friends. As I stepped hesitantly inside the walls, the dogs were called off, and the women came forward, smiling.

Even around Singaradja (which is the most commercial section of Bali), the women, in the privacy of their own courtyards, do not wear clothing above the



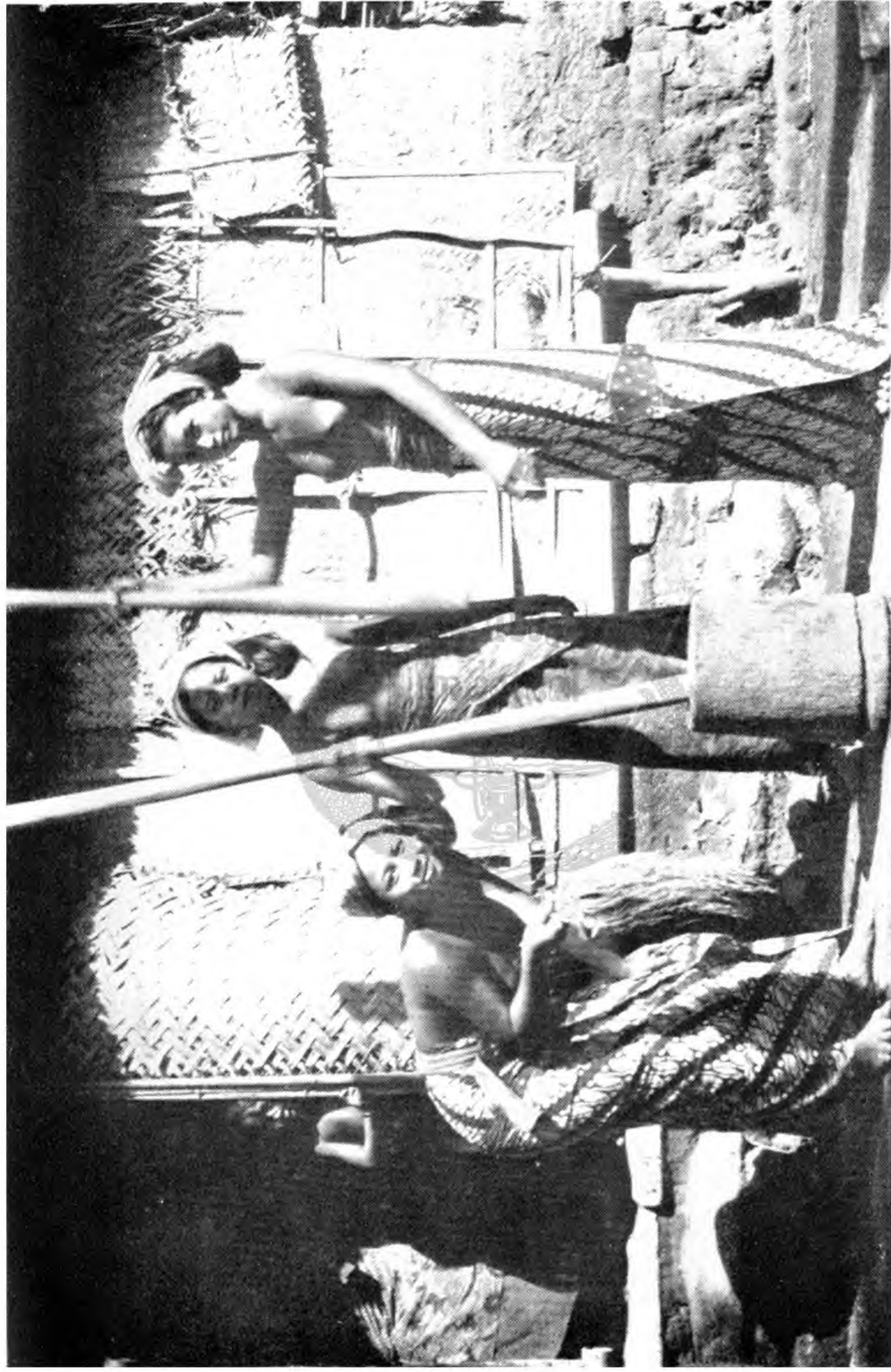
waist as they go about their daily work. Of course they were only wearing their dark-printed everyday *kains*, the universal skirt of the island, which they drape around their hips so that the cloth falls in flowing folds to the ankles. I was astonished at the dark beauty of their perfect physique; from long exposure to the sun and wind, their skin is a fine golden-brown gleaming with high lights. Except the aged, all Balinese women seem to be lithe and slender. Most of them have good features, large dark eyes, and very black hair which they wear loosely coiled in a knot on the neck.

One attractive young woman picked up a coconut bowl of fruit from a doorstep to offer us. I was thankful that I could say "*Trima kasih*," for the moment I uttered the common Malay "thank you," they were all hospitality. The older children came forward at the reassurance of their mothers, and smiled and touched my hand; they were especially intrigued with the gold kid belt which I wore on my sports dress. Two little bambinos, dressed only in their dusty brown skins, kept shyly in the background, afraid of my pale white face.

The compound was a miniature village of houses and courtyards. Everybody seemed to be busy; some of the women were grinding corn in crude stone mortars, and others were at work cooking or weaving.

On the back wall perched a row of little household shrines, one for each member of the family. I stopped before the largest one, which was reserved for the





These Balinese maidens are happy and contented to grind the rice to make the cakes the gods like. There is no worry about changing styles here. One new *batik* a year is the main item of a Balinese belle's wardrobe.





A private family shrine, the type which appears in the courtyard of almost every Balinese household. Note the bamboo "prayer" tassel. The white cloth strip is a sign of a special seasonal offering.



oldest ancestor. An offering is always kept there to the departed spirit. A tiny clay bowl filled with red croton flowers was placed before an ugly little idol of carved wood grinning in the shadowed niche. Sometimes the household altars have no idols, but just the same the offering is there, to the god of the sun or of the rain or of the wind. I wonder what these strange people feel and think when they place a handful of red and yellow rice before their household shrine?

Every village, no matter how small the population, is centred around a temple. The island is densely populated though, so that even the very small villages are inhabited by a goodly number of natives. Balinese prefer to live in close quarters, near one another. They have a fear of distance, and great space is associated with the evils of the dark forest and the night in between.

Only the eastern part of the island is inhabited. The western half is still an unexplored jungle of wasteland. The natives believe it to be "filled with tigers," their most dreaded enemy. So the majority of the inhabitants of Bali cluster around the south-east portion of the island, as near as possible to Den Pasar and Klocengkoeng, the most popular native centres.

All over the island, you can spot the temples by their high, pointed gateways set into brick and clay walls. Every village has several shrines and their spacious courtyards serve as worshipping places, council halls, and amusement centres. The temple is the most



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important edifice in the village and the entire daily life of the people is bound about it.

Ordinarily, I don't believe in travellers rushing off to see temples the minute they arrive in an Oriental country. I felt a deep appreciation of the simple wooded shrines of Japan, and I regretted the crumbling decay of China's picturesque pagodas, now sadly relegated to the birds. But in Bali, if you want to see the real life of the people, you *must* see them at their temples.

My first look at a Balinese temple was at Sangsit, near Singaradja. Sangsit is the largest and most richly ornate of all Balinese temples, so it is an appropriate one to see first. Sangsit is said to have been built in honour of the rice god. As rice is the chief product of the island, it is easy to see how important this rice god is, named *Dewi Cri*.

Most Balinese temples are built in about the same formation. Up the steps and inside the main gate is an outer rectangular courtyard, spacious enough for the large Balinese dances. Three oblong courtyards are enclosed within each other like puzzle boxes, with gates leading between them. In the second court, the people gather for their feasts. Each courtyard is closed in with high clay walls, pierced with pointed gates. Within the third central court is the temple itself—the inner “holy of holies,” with small shrines for each deity.

Sangsit is magnificent—a feast of sculpture and ornament to the eye. Three exquisite temples are



consecrated to the trinity Ciwa, Vishnu, and Brahma. They are made of red and black sandstone and literally covered with relief stone images, birds, beasts, and flowers to represent the lavishness of these Nature gods. In the crowded friezes of design overlapping design, I could distinguish Chinese, Hindu, and even Polynesian influence. Its polychrome painting is unusual.

Three stone chairs, or thrones, stand before the temples; they too are intricately carved with every grotesque design in the Balinese category. I called them the "high chairs" of the gods. No one ever sits in them, not even the high priests, for they are reserved for the "spirit gods." On festival days, the priests drape the three chairs in white cloth and put little bowls of food and a betel-nut dish before each place. I've even seen a soft cushion of moss placed on the stone seat of a favourite. I grew very curious about these mysterious gods of the sky and trees and winds that command such gentle attention. Even their origin seems obscure, for everywhere I heard different stories of them.

About the mossy courtyard, among the roots of the sweet-scented *frangipani* trees here and there, were placed all kinds of grinning idols, fawning stone dragons, and strange hobgoblins with gaping mouths, squat Buddhas with protruding tummies, and the familiar Hindu *naga* snake with its seven heads. All these images were set to guard the three shrines of Ciwa, Vishnu, and Brahma against any unwelcome spirit visitors.

Though there wasn't a soul in the temple at the time I first saw it, I had the distinct feeling that many



people had been there a moment before. All around the ground between the seats of the gods were scattered the wind-blown heads of yellow *kambodja* blossoms, filling the air with a scent like musk.

Sticking in the edges of the thatched roofs of the little shrines, I saw curious cut ornaments like pin-wheels. They were fluted rosettes of bamboo and palm leaf, so beautifully fashioned that I took one down in my hand to examine it.

Our gentle-natured chauffeur saw me and frowned. "You must not take," he said. "That is one man's prayer, you must not take away. . . ."

At once I returned that prayer to its high place on the roof. I put it back, tenderly, regretfully, for I would not interfere with a man's prayers. Theirs is a beautiful symbolism; if they have a prayer in their hearts, they evolve it into a nosegay of tasselled leaves as tangible evidence of their desire for spiritual communion.

Overhead the sky was the deepest blue, and a cap of white clouds hid the mountain-tops. The twisted branches of a giant gnarled *banyan* had looked on that mountain-top for untold years. I felt a strange peace. It isn't only the exotic carvings of these strange temples that impress the newcomer, but the atmosphere of the courtyards, the dreaming silence, the heavy sweetness of the *frangipani*, the droning of the bees, and the moss like velvet under foot.

No wonder the Balinese have such reverence for their temples.



### CHAPTER III

## THROUGH NORTH BALI

At Tedjakoela, beside the road, there stands an odd bathing place. A huge stone-walled rectangle is divided into four compartments, one for the men to bathe in, one for the women, another for visitors, and the fourth—for *ponies*! These shaggy little beasts await their turn patiently and stand under the cool water of the *pantjoeran* as long as they're allowed to remain.

There is a nice legend about Tedjakoela. "Long ago," said an old Balinese, "this spot was so arid that all the people prayed for water. They stopped their work and prayed. Their priests prayed, but there was no answer, and it looked as if the place was doomed to be a desert. Finally, after the priests had prayed patiently for two long years, they made a special offering, and once again the people stopped their work and made a reverent plea for water. Suddenly great fountains gushed from the hills—sparkling spring water—just as you see it there in the stream that comes from nowhere out of the solid rock. That's how this bathing pool began, my friend. And every moon we still offer thanks that the water may continue. . . ."

In such a warm and languid climate, I hardly expected to find the natives over-particular in the matter of cleanliness. But the Balinese seem to have a passion for bathing, and the pools are used every morning of



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the year. Every village has its bathing place. You have to arise with the birds to catch them at their ablutions, but it's well worth while, for you will see men, women, and children, as shapely as bronze figures, disport in the crystal mountain water. It is like happening in on the Garden of Eden at dawn. The tiniest tots, intent on their toes, scrub themselves vigorously with bits of stone! The women have an ingenious way of bathing quickly and slipping into their *sarongs* almost before you glimpse them,—they move with such rapidity. Then, filling their pottery bowls where the water springs forth from the earth, they go off through the lanes about their day's work. And the men go down to the fields about their business of making things grow from the earth.

I felt a very privileged soul—to be in this enchanted isle, riding swiftly over the cool tamarind-shaded roads. At Gitgit, the road dropped in a sudden cut-off. Below, a whole panorama of the valley spread out in a fan, tiered in rows and rows of *sawahs* (rice paddies) reflecting bright patches of sky.

The countryside every mile of the way is unbelievably picturesque. We passed every variety of scenery—hot sulphur springs, little mirror lakes, and here and there thick whispering groves of *banyans*. These are considered sacred trees, and nearly every grove harbours a hidden shrine where the villagers, bound for market, pause to offer up a brief prayer for the day's success.

Here life seems real. Our rushed existence at home—where we dash to offices in underground tubes, and never think of proffering a small prayer for the



day's success—seems, by comparison, artificial and unnatural.

The Carons had invited me to dine with them in their home in Singaradja, and see their Balinese collection. The library was a museum of native arts. I was fortunate, indeed, to see these splendid examples early in my visit; for later I was able to recognize good Balinese art when I saw it. All of the Dutch officials in Bali are informed on Balinese craftwork, and travellers find them generous in explaining.

Out of carved wooden boxes, the Carons brought forth treasure after treasure for me to see. Black wooden idols with horned wings—half men, half dragon—that some old Balinese wood-carver had spent many months in making. There are seldom two of these images alike or, for that matter, of any hand-made thing found in Bali. Everything is originally designed, and as the workmen make up their ideas as they go along, each object made is a definite expression of the individual.

Madame Caron was most interested in the weaving; she had some beautiful lengths of cloth—gold and red and vivid colours woven between. Sometimes they were appliquéd with gold and silver leaf in a heavy crusted design; these were called *pradas*, and are reserved for special temple ceremonies.

But the *lontars* took my eye! They are old temple books made of palm-leaf pages and inscribed in queer Sanscrit lettering.

“Is it possible to buy these any more, Mr. Caron?”



The one I held in my hand was an old Hindu legend, written in the finest Sanscrit with a pointed instrument. Its covers were made of thin slabs of wood delicately carved, and then painted red and gold. It was beautiful!

"After they scratch in the lettering on the new green leaf," he was explaining, "they powder the page with a kind of graphite that stays in the indentations. They do not have pen and ink, you know. This old book tells one of the famous stories of the Hindu *Ramayana*."

"Oh, I *would* like to have a *lontar*. I don't think I've ever held a more fascinating book in my hand."

"There is a very old man in the village near here who still makes *lontars* in Sanscrit. They are the rarest, of course, because only the higher caste workmen understand the Sanscrit; it is nearly an extinct language now. If we do not hurry him, but give him plenty of time, I think he will make one for you, if you'd like it."

What luck!

An extraordinary gourd vine grew in the Carons' shaded courtyard. It was not unlike Jack's beanstalk, in the rapidity with which it grew. It bore giant bell-shaped flowers of deep orange, and at the same time long slender gourds striped with yellow like a shower of golden bells. It was the most brilliant, ornamental vine I had ever seen.

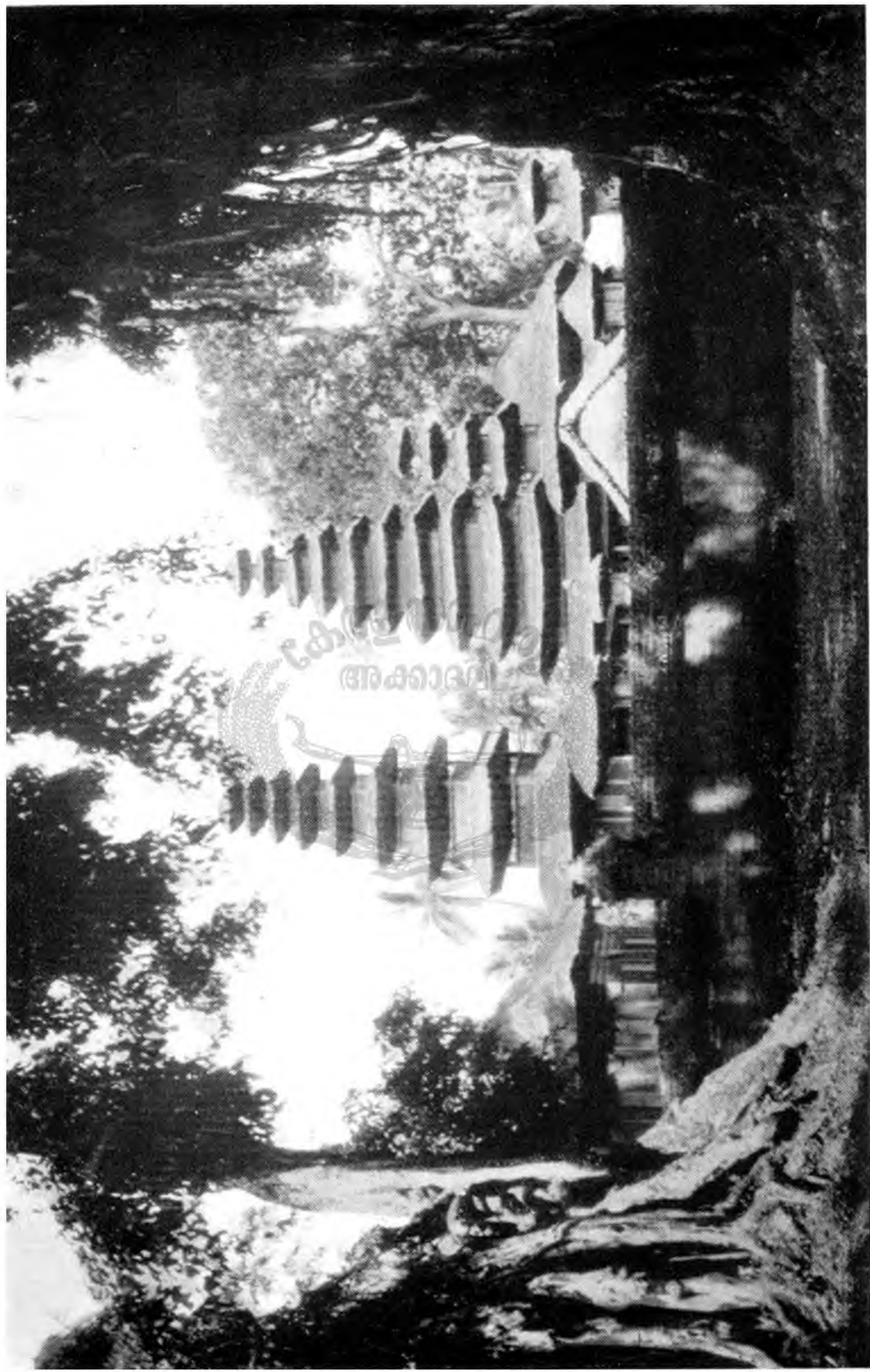
Some of the bell-shaped gourds were already dry. When I shook one, it rattled a treasure of seeds. My hostess gave me a handful, which I put carefully into an envelope in my purse. I carried those seeds





**A *meroe*** is the simpler type of temple found in the smallest villages of Bali. During an offering these thatched roofs are stuck with “prayers”—little rosettes and wheels made of white palm leaf.





These *meroes*, temples of pagoda-like structure, are very picturesque in groups among the vivid green *banyans*. Note the individual family shrines against the wall.



for nearly a year before I reached home. Sad to relate, they refused to grow in our pale climate, even in sun-kissed California. I'm convinced they were magic seeds, anyway.

At eight o'clock, it was still light—it never seems to grow really dark in Bali until very late, and then it isn't a heavy black darkness, but only a luminous gentle darkness with the glowing stars so close overhead that they seem like tiny lamps flickering.

Hardly had we stepped down from the big Caron porch when a wavering echo of flute-like bells drifted across the valley.

"There's the *gamelan*, calling the natives to offering," said my friends in one breath. "You are fortunate, but then there's always an offering going on somewhere, if you can find it. If we walk down the road toward the valley, we're sure to find the crowd gathering."

Again the air quivered with the wail of the *gamelan*. There is no music in the world like it. Gay and sad, it is restful yet primitive, in its peculiar minor tones. Long after the bells have ceased ringing, the echo lingers.

From every lane along the way, natives glided silently on bare feet. As we rounded the curve in the road, we saw the flares of banana stems lighting up a clearing in the woods near the village temple. White cloth streamers fluttering from tall bamboo poles were the sign of an offering about to take place.

The natives were gathered in little groups around the fires, because the offering had not begun in earnest



yet. The brown shoulders of the men were oiled to gleaming bronze, and they wore hibiscus blossoms behind their ears. The women bearing the offerings were just arriving, carrying preposterous tall pyramids of fruit on platters on their heads. Jewels flashed in the firelight from their hair and ears, and they were decked in their ceremonial *kains* of red and yellow and magenta. The children were as dazzling as their mothers, with odd bandeaux of flowers on their heads. They had brushed their hair back from their foreheads, and then pasted rows of tiny flower heads down along the hair line in a fetching decoration.

The temple yard was soon heaped with offerings, red compotes of carved wood on which the great cones were built up of fruits and flowers twined together. Long sticks of fruit were made with twisted palm leaf and mangosteens braided into a pole. A bamboo platter was crowned with a fine roast suckling pig in a wreath of white flowers. This is one of the most favoured offerings to the gods.

Fortunately, we had arrived in time to see the opening ceremony. Never will I forget my first sight of a night offering in Bali. The scene in the temple yard was like some biblical pageant.

“Clang Dang!” The *gong* called the crowd to attention. The devout gathered in kneeling position on the ground, and the white-robed *pedanda* (priest) began to chant a Hindu prayer. At intervals, a ripple of little brass bells punctuated his litany. Serious-eyed boy-acolytes, dressed in white, swung long-chained brazier



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pots to and fro. As the blue incense smoke curled upward, its pungent perfume mingled with the sweet night air and cloying fragrance of the flowers and offerings.

The bells rang out sharply again. The priest walked about sprinkling holy water over the crowd. Then the kneelers raised their heads and lifted their right hands holding aloft a flower. Two little boys brought us a handful of gardenias that we might have flowers like the rest. How these little ones watched and imitated every movement of their parents!

This beauty-loving race thrive on ritual. They throw themselves into their ceremonies with an almost fanatic zeal to the accompaniment of medieval music and strange incense. Ritual is such an inborn part of the life of these people that I don't believe they will ever change.

I myself felt carried back to some slumbering past . . . high overhead the full moon sent down a shining radiance over the kneeling figures. At moments, the atmosphere was so tense that I felt a part of the ceremony; and then again I was a hopeless alien to those dryads of the woods.

After an hour, we slipped away, while the temple crowds were still absorbed in their ritual. The night was so romantic that I expected to see lovers along the moonlit lanes. But the world was as still as though it were uninhabited. Every twig crackled loudly under our feet. Not once in my whole visit to Bali did I see any signs of love among the Balinese. They are not a passionate people, even though they live in what is



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probably the only paradise on earth to-day. They marry as soon as they reach puberty, and that is the end of their love-making. Upon inquiry I found there is no word in the Balinese language for love. It seems to take a more repressed civilization like our own to sense the tropical night as the idyllic background for the blossoming of love.

A few yards away, the sea sighed gently. The night seemed too glorious to bear.





## CHAPTER IV

### GLIMPSES OF THE JUNGLE

BACK at my rest-room I was loath to shut the door against the night. Even though the door didn't amount to much—a sort of shuttered half-door, which let the air in from the top and bottom for ventilation. The windows were shuttered likewise, so that one practically slept in the open. I didn't see a glass window in any rest-house in Bali, except at Kintamani in the chilly mountain region.

Doors are never locked in Bali. The first night, I asked my *djongos* (boy) for a key, but he answered with the usual "*Tida bisa*" ("It doesn't matter"). "There are no bad people in Bali."

Early the next morning, I was awakened by the *djongos* knocking on my door with a cup of thick black coffee diluted with hot milk, the favourite Dutch eye-opener. A little tray of juicy fruit with a stone like a loquat served as an appetizer. I never tire of tropical fruits in which the woods of Bali abound. Often, they are like an old friend in new disguise, such as the *pomelo* with its pink segments tasting so like a sweet grape-fruit.

By the time the sun was up, we were off for the day, motoring along a fine stretch of hard road. The *mandoer* had stowed a basket of lunch in the tonneau for



we had a long day ahead. We took the hill road through the deep forests into the historic Tabanan hill-country.

By noon, the way had grown so steep that we were obliged to give up the faithful blue car and go on foot to the object of our trip, the pilgrim shrine—Poera Wato Kaoc. The path was difficult, and we stopped at every break in the trees, where the whole valley lay below, tempting us to admire the view.

Forests grow so thick in Bali that only in the lowlands has man been able to keep them cleared away for his rice-growing. In every direction the hand-made water terraces are tiered down and down into the valley. Reflecting the sky, they look like giant stairs of blue glass.

The thick growth around us grew wilder the higher we went. The path led between giant ferns and tropical flowering shrubs. Overhead, the glossy branches of coffee trees dropped a shower of red berries every time we pushed them aside. Wild gardenias and magnolias smelled too sweet in the warm noon air. With every step, the jungle seemed to be closing in on us. No matter how often the natives cut a clearing for this path to the temple, it grows up again overnight.

The trees of Bali are magnificent—in the jungle border where they have never been disturbed, the lichen has grown thick upon their corrugated trunks. Long festoons of moss and vines hang to the ground. We were continually stepping over the jutting aerial roots of the grand old *banyan* trees whose thick tendrils often extend over a hundred feet from the trunk.



## GLIMPSES OF THE JUNGLE

A tree I had never seen before was the *magic* Casuarina—the natives say it is a magic tree. They also call it the “she-oak,” because they say that if you stand in its shadow on a full-moon night it tells the secrets of the future when the wind murmurs in its branches.

Orchids, called “little doves,” grow on the trunks of certain trees—dainty, three-petalled white blossoms whose larger petals resemble the spread wings of tiny birds. These orchids seem to grow on air, without soil, their tendrils hanging in space.

Botanists claim that every known orchid grows in Bali. We saw white and yellow and purple and green ones. The *kananga* is also a peculiar fragile-looking flower with green petals. And I heard of the “belladonna” lily, which is supposed to contain a strong narcotic. The natives, who believe in all the wiles of *goona goona* magic, make a brew of the belladonna flowers as a potion to slip into the cup of a rival. You hear many strange tales in Bali. I could hardly believe the story of the giant flower called the *Rafflesia Arnoldi*, whose blossom is said to have a spread of thirty inches and a height of six feet!—the largest flower in the world. I did not see it growing, but I brought home a picture of it. Rhododendrons grow in a riot of colour—the most vivid blossoms of deep orange and red and purple. You can imagine what a wilderness of flowers we found ourselves in. Great spider webs, hung with diamond dew, stretched across our way, showing that no man had set foot on our path that day.



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In the noonday stillness of the forest, we were constantly aware of the moving animal life hidden behind the screen of leaves and foliage, yet ever present in faint sounds and rustlings.

How the order had changed: in the village, man rules the fields, and bends the growth to his liking, but here—we were the small defenceless beings at the mercy of Nature. Everything around us, every crackle of a twig, intensified our helplessness. If we stopped and listened, all was quiet. But when we moved along there was a perfect orchestra of forest sounds in the depths of the thick brush, an endless chorus of beasts, birds, and insects—rumbling, chattering, buzzing. . . .

Gaudy parrots and crimson “top knots” flashed by; jade-green parakeets and wild canaries; gibbon families swung from *liana* vines across our paths, the old males scolding us soundly. The forest was alive with blue-green dragon-flies and velvet spotted moths; pearl-pink doves, black cockatoos, and humming-birds with jewelled backs; wild boar and wild mongoose. The life of the jungle is ever moving, ever changing. The call of birds, the jabber of monkeys, the bellow of beasts at times rise to a pandemonium, and then soften to a threatening stillness; but its secret life goes on continuously. At dawn it awakes and drowns the air with busyness, in the heat of noon it drowns and murmurs, and at the fall of night it grows to a roaring battle of creatures weak and strong. And every day it is the same, soothed or swayed by the whims of Nature.



Relieved that we had not collided with a striped tiger, or a fancy snake, we came at last to the clearing where the temple stood. It was a simple pagoda with thatched roof, set beside a lake as blue as a piece of sky. Hindu and Buddhist stone images covered with moss guarded the temple entrance. One old idol with clasped hands dated from the twelfth century, archaeologists have figured. Had these gnarled old *banyans* been growing since the twelfth century, too?

It was past noon, the hour when all the animals of the jungle take their *siesta*. There was not even the note of a bird in the air. Not a sound, not a soul about—except one lone youth, sitting cross-legged like a statue, in the temple courtyard. He was serving time as a guard. I believe he must have sat all day like that, only moving his lips, chewing his *sirih* and betel-nut. This habit is the favourite but regrettable occupation of so many Balinese, regrettable because it stains their teeth and lips a horrible blood-red.

I watched the fellow take out a butterfly-shaped box of silver (a cunning article in itself). Inside it, in compartments, were white lime, the brown *betel* nuts, some shreds of tobacco, and the leaves of the *sirih* plant which makes the vile-coloured spittle. He would lay out a leaf, and then place the other ingredients upon it, wad it up and stuff it into his cheek. The only redeeming feature of this Oriental habit is that it has been found so conducive to contemplation that it has been adopted as a part of the Hindu religion.



My companion said there were plenty of tigers in this vicinity "in season." Though I usually enjoy excitement, I was distinctly glad it wasn't the season, for we were certainly miles from help. But the scene was too peaceful for tigers—it was probably only another legend.

Our picnic basket had been nicely packed and I half dreamed over a chicken leg, wishing I might find a little thatched hut and live in this blessed island a long, long time.

Our native chauffeur—always trying to please—brought us a handful of mangosteens. They were the first I had tasted, though I had seen the purple fruit at the temples and thought they were egg-plants. A mangosteen is about the size of a small orange, it looks as tough as leather, and is exactly the purple colour of a plum. But, ah!—once you have cut open that hard woody covering, inside are five segments of delicious juicy white fruit that defy description. A strawberry, peach, and pineapple combined, with a magic flavour thrown in. Delicious beyond words—one *never* gets enough!

For himself, the chauffeur had reserved a *durian*, a queer melon-shaped fruit covered with sharp horny spikes. At first I expressed an interest in this forbidden fruit, but as soon as he cut into it with his indispensable *kris*, I told him he could go and eat it in the woods. That fruit exuded a smell as putrid as a spoiled egg or very bad limburger. The *durian* is called the skunk of the fruit kingdom. I have heard some rare epicures say it tastes not unlike vanilla custard. Well! I never cared for custard, anyway.



## GLIMPSES OF THE JUNGLE

I must have dropped off to sleep—with my head against a rock. But after my forty winks, I awoke as refreshed as a nap always leaves one in the tropics.

By the time we had walked down the steep road back to the blue car, I was glad to be driven again. Everywhere along the way, we had to stop when some quaint village or pagoda-tiered temple caught our fancy. How I wished I had been born an artist!

We stopped at a fantastic pile of rock sculpture which the natives call the "Elephant's Cave." It is a temple built in a solid rock bank. It is carved like a giant elephant's head, with an opening under its trunk which goes back into a black cavern.

Inside, it was as dark as pitch. I could feel the little hairs rising along the back of my neck as we heard an ominous rustling sound as of snakes, or ghosts, or *dragons*! Just at that moment, the chauffeur, fumbling in the dark, lit the bundle of rice straw he had carried. The moment the flame illumined the black walls, we could see that they were covered with a blanket of *bats*. The stench was nauseating and I was glad to get outside. The chauffeur volunteered that bats sleep during day; that we must return some day at six o'clock in the evening; then we'd see a "cloud of bats that darkened the sky!" The Balinese have a fearful respect for bats; they revere them as reincarnated souls of evil people who go abroad to work havoc in the night. Perhaps that's why all good Balinese stay at home at night.



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At Loekloek, I had a chance to see one of the little temples built in a tree. I never could find the spot again, it was secreted beyond such a tortuous path. We had to step high over the snake-like aerial roots of old *banyans*. And then, stooping low, we suddenly found ourselves inside the very heart of the tree. In the filtering light, I could make out a pointed wooden shrine fastened inside. The inevitable pin-wheels of bamboo were there—the visiting cards of earlier pilgrims of the day. I took three yellow flowers out of my belt and laid them beside the other offerings.

Vishnu was the god of the Waringin shrine. Vishnu combines in himself the powers of all the gods. This Vishnu of Bali is said to embody the same meaning and characteristics as the original Indian god of that name.





## DEN PASAR AND A ‘‘RIJSTTAFEL’’

NEXT day, we drove to the thriving town of Den Pasar, which is the real native capital and the largest city in south Bali. Den Pasar has the only natural harbour of the island, but it is so shallow that only very small steamers can land. It seems to be of little importance, however, in the progress of the town, and few people even know there is a harbour there.

Den Pasar is the most interesting town in the island, as far as the native craftwork is concerned; for it is the centre of the weaving industry, woodcarving, and sculpture. The museum of these arts in Den Pasar travellers will find well worth visiting.

Many of the finest temples of Bali are located around Den Pasar, particularly in the holy forest near Blankioe, which I shall describe later. One of the ‘‘sights’’ of the town is the Poera Satria, which was once the favourite offering place of the Balinese princes who made pilgrimages to it from all parts of the island. Though the temple lies in ruins now, it is greatly respected by the natives.

Den Pasar is the only town in Bali which possesses even the resemblance of a modern hotel. The K.P.M. Steamship Company has recently built a very comfortable ‘‘Pavilion-style’’ hotel there. ‘‘Pavilion-style’’ means that each room has its own small screened



porch which means much in the way of ventilation, comfort, and privacy.

One of the novel features of these Dutch hotels, which one finds throughout Java, is the original type of bathroom. It is little more than a corner "pool," built off the bedroom—usually of cement, walled up about four feet from the floor, and fed with a single cold-water pipe. You are supposed to stand beside the so-called "bath," on a latticed wooden mat, and sluice yourself with the cold water which you dip out of the pool with a big tin dipper. Real "old timers" use a coconut shell or dried gourd because it floats handily on top of the water. On no account are you to step into the bath—and if you do, in ignorance, you'll find your feet cut to ribbons on the broken glass, kept in the bottom as a reminder *to keep out of the water*. This struck me as the strangest bath I'd ever seen.

But this sluicing arrangement is nevertheless the best bath for the tropics. There is a theory that stepping into a tub of cold water is too great a shock for the body in the tropics. Rich and poor alike take this "tea-cup bath" of Java and Bali. Custom is no respecter of persons; I learned to like it, too.

For tiffin, a small *rijsttafel*<sup>1</sup> is usually served,—for all the *pasangrahans*, though run by natives, are under Dutch management. A *rijsttafel* is a popular dish which has been evolved out of the India curry, glorified with local condiments, spices, and countless accompanying dishes. It's a Dutch lunch that you learn to like—I

<sup>1</sup> See Addenda for a simplified *rijsttafel* recipe.



mean that you don't especially care for your first taste of it, but after you've had it a few times, you begin to relish it,—and finally you become an addict. It's like learning to eat green olives, artichokes, and avocados.

Since I've returned home and become an ordinary citizen of civilization again, I have a real craving ever so often for a good, hot, spicy *rijsttafel* with the cold Dutch beer that properly accompanies it. But where, in our world, can you find *krupok*, jungle nuts, *sambal goreng*, and the native “little red fish” that burn your mouth so deliciously? And—for that matter—the cold Dutch beer?

To prepare a real *rijsttafel*, such as we so often had in Java and Bali, takes many hours of work. I've heard it called “the Dutch lunch which takes twenty-three men and a boy to serve!”

It even takes a long time to eat. Promptly at noon, you are supposed to whet your appetite with a whisky-and-soda. Then, boys in white uniforms start a procession from the kitchens. As many as twenty boys carry two platters of food apiece! A big round soup plate is placed in front of you on the table, and heaped with white fluffy rice (*nossi*), cooked in the native way. Then the waiters pass by, in single file, while you heap the “accessories” from their platters, to garnish your rice. The mainstay of a *rijsttafel* is a yellow curry gravy made from stewed chicken, lamb, or veal with curry and herbs; then comes a minced meat loaf called *fricadel*. A parade of stuffed eggs, fried duck eggs, and sometimes boiled pigeon eggs



follows. A platter of fried tomatoes; sautéed bananas (which relieve the burn of the curry when your tongue feels on fire); crisp browned onion rings; chicken and meat,—roasted, stewed, and desiccated; boiled cucumbers; pickled bamboo. . . .

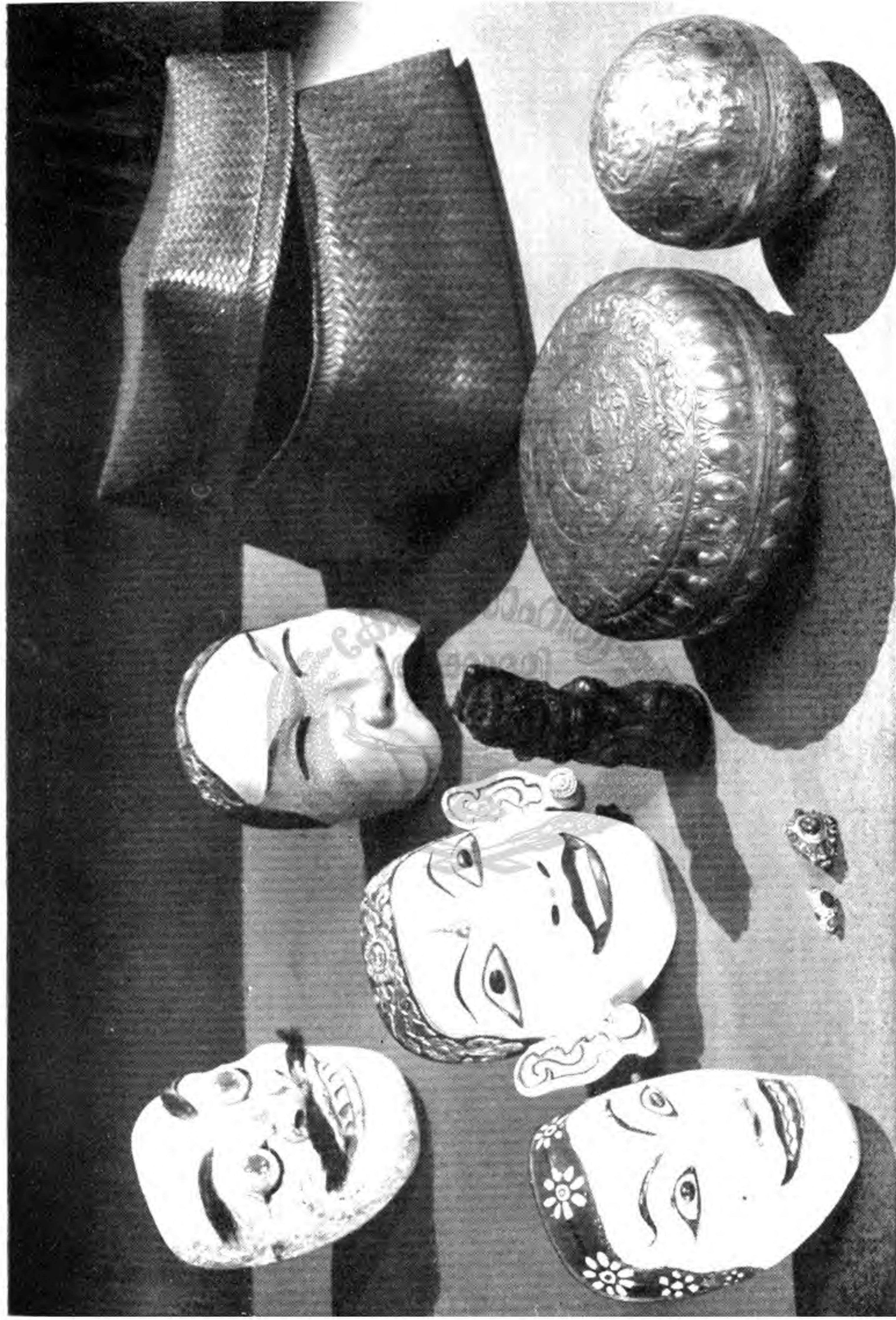
As a side-tempter, there are three kinds of *krupok*, or pounded paste of shrimp, crab, and lobster combined with tapioca which makes it swell when dropped in hot fat. I've watched the natives cook these *krupok* chips. They are delicious to eat, hot out of the iron pots. They are "little cousins" to potato chips, and yet quite different in flavour. The thin dried chips of *krupok* paste are dropped into an iron pan full of hot oil, when they promptly swell into crisp little balloons. They are drained on brown paper, and sprinkled with salt. They are unsurpassable as an appetizer, served with a cold drink.

The final dainty of the *rijsttafel* is the "curry table"—a compartment dish filled with many different spices, chutneys, fried peanuts, toasted shredded coconut, marinated chicken livers, shrimps in hot sauce, and the red *sambal*, the "tiny red fish" of the fiery disposition.

Oh! I nearly forgot the *satis*—and they are the juiciest tidbits of all,—those little morsels of young goat meat skewered on small wooden spits and roasted over a charcoal fire, basted with hot spiced coconut oil as they roast. They are delicious beyond description.

After a *rijsttafel*, one certainly requires a *siesta*. The Dutch have devised a special sleeping chair with





Part of the author's large collection of Balinese pieces. Masks carved out of thin Albizzia wood, a miniature Hindu idol of teak, a gold temple ring with crude rubies, a priest's thumb ring, a red market basket, and two fine examples of hand-beaten solid silver bowls.





A Balinese expert wood-carver making a fligree pattern on a coconut that will probably be used as a lamp. Notice the long finger-nails on the left hand, which show he is of the high caste of artisans and wood-carvers.



extended arms that I'm sure was inspired by the languor which follows a *rijsttafel*. Newcomers not used to the enervation of the tropics will find that their tempo slows down after the noon hour, and that a brief rest is necessary during the middle of the day. A good hour's nap in a darkened room, after tiffin, followed by a refreshing "sluicing" in the stone bath, fits you to enjoy the evening when the earth cools down.

At three-thirty, I was awakened from my *siesta* by the jabbering of native women peddlers in the courtyard. They knock at every door, and if there's any sign of life inside they squat on the doorstep and take down the baskets from their heads. They tie up their treasures in a square of printed cloth like the Japanese *firoshki*. I could never resist these old women with their fascinating wares. But thanks to Madame Caron, I learned to discriminate about the value and quality of their curios.

One seldom finds two things alike in the heap of rings, woven tapestry lengths, *slendangs*, theatrical masks, betel-nut boxes of brass and silver, tamarind wooden figurines, temple bells with idols for handles, and the old Balinese *lontars*, which were usually dilapidated beyond repair. The heaps of jewellery reposed in painted gold and red baskets sewn around the edge in designs with American white china *panty buttons*. I'd have given a lot to know where they got them!

One has to bargain with all peddlers in Oriental countries. The Dutch *guilder* and the *ringit*, Balinese



“big money” (worth two and a half *guilders*, is the common currency of the island, along with the Dutch pennies or *kopengs*. Except for the peddlers, few of the natives carry money about.

As long as I had an extra piece of silver in my pocket, I could never resist the masks. By far the most interesting of Balinese curios are the discarded theatrical masks which the travelling peddlers sometimes carry—comic and tragic masks, thin carved wooden faces with wide grins, mother-of-pearl teeth, and bulging eyes. I had been collecting masks throughout my travels, and I was thrilled with those I came across in Bali.

In Den Pasar, luck was with me. I found two good masks in one day. One had such an array of fancy teeth that it deserved the name of “Painless Parker.” The other, an anaemic-looking mask with dead-white face and vampire eyes, I called “Cleopatra.” They hang side by side on my study wall to-day.

A Dutch artist, named Moojen, whose acquaintance I made while wandering through the temples of Bali, was collecting masks for the Dutch Government’s museums. Seeing my interest in them, he invited me to go with him to visit a famous mask-maker in Den Pasar.

In the cool of approaching evening, we walked to the edge of the town through a long narrow path to a shaded courtyard in the rear, filled with the usual cocks, pigs, dogs, and youngsters. There we met the



man famous throughout Bali for his art in making masks. He was tall and rotund, with a tremendous nose. His coffee-coloured bald head was as shiny as old ivory and fringed with curling black hair. Above his left ear he wore a Plumaria blossom. When he smiled, his teeth and the whites of his eyes gleamed in his dark face. He looked like a Hindu. He wore a nondescript striped shirt which hung over a dingy *sarong*. On one arm was a gold bracelet.

When we arrived, he was whittling an oval of thin white wood with a spoon-shaped knife. He dropped his work, and with much bowing invited us to enter and sit down on the only available seat, a red leather trunk. He went on whittling as he told us about his masks. Most of them were half-faces with high cheekbones that were even more effective above a moving mouth than a complete mask would have been.

When he saw how interested we were, he opened other low trunks of masks; there seemed to be every imaginable Hindu character; weird and horrible masks of devil gods with long red leather tongues and clacking jaws, Nubian faces with exaggerated noses, thin long-faced masks of vampires, calm flat-nosed masks of Chinese—a veritable rogues' gallery of faces.

The old chap had once been an actor and he could assume any role he chose with alacrity. As he picked up each mask, he would adjust it over his face and illustrate its character with a deft gesture and a few words. He was a born actor; anyone could tell that,



watching his pantomime. Fortunately, I had my handy camera with me and caught some good snapshots.

He was greatly flattered and called out an order for the *djongos* to bring us *jeruk* drinks; these are made with the sour little Balinese lemons and *arak*, a palm liquor far more potent than gin. Mellow with drink, and eloquent with a good audience, he told of his experiences with the travelling *wayang golek* puppet shows and the pantomime companies, called the *wayang wong*.

As a climax, to dazzle us completely, he brought out his favourite masks of the *Rangas*, those made to represent the Balinese witches, "she-devils," or evil-gods-on-a-rampage. These masks were made of heavier wood, painted red and black and white, with long lolling red tongues covered with fur, and pointed tweaked leather ears. The lower jaw was a separate piece of wood, controlled on a hinge so that the wearer could manipulate it up and down with a loud clacking or gnashing sound. Moojen had already found three fine specimens of *Ranga* masks in Den Pasar, and I could see his eyes sparkle with delight over these beauties.

I bought one *Djanger* dancer's mask from the old actor, and before we departed, he made me a present of a fascinating Hindu woman's half-mask which I had admired very much. I was profuse with thanks and at first declined to accept the present. But I could not hurt his feelings. He was a romantic old rascal, endowed with all the gallant graces. As we left the



courtyard with the masks under our arms, he bowed low, and with a grand flourish presented me with the flower he had worn over his ear. I realized it was a mark of highest personal esteem! Moojen said that my blonde hair had made a hit.

The Balinese are craftsmen by nature. They especially like to work with metal, believing that there are magic forces in metal—brass, iron, silver, and gold. They mould all sorts of Hindu bowls, betel-nut salvers, sweetmeat dishes, holy-water vessels, *sirih* sets, prayer bells, ornamented cocks' spurs, and so on from these metals.

The women are equally clever with their fingers at weaving. From the most primitive looms they weave red and gold wedding skirts, a fine cloth called *tenganan*, and *slendangs* with which they bind their breasts for temple festivals. The stiff-gilded *pradas* are made "golden" by applying actual gold leaf to rich *kains*.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE ARTS OF BALI

EVERYWHERE I went in Bali, I found these so-called primitive people to be inherently artistic. For centuries they have made a cult of beauty.

Whenever I watched workers in silver repoussé, for instance, I noted that the designer worked entirely without a pattern, developing the motif for a flower or leaf as he worked. How the pattern ever came out to meet exactly at the end was more than I could understand. But there was never any over-lapping, or the least sign of clumsiness.

Most of their designs are original; I mean, you never see them in other countries. Take, for instance, the little bird-shaped drinking bowl which is used in temples and market-places. The whole idea of its shape is that it shall be *hygienic*. A native boy can pick up the bird-shaped cup, pour a stream of water into his uplifted mouth from the beaked spout without touching it with his lips. In this way, hundreds of people are able to drink from the same bowl without contaminating it.

Most of the craftsmen in silver or stone or wood work are born of families who have always worked in the same art. The young artisans start working with their parents when they are old enough to hold a tool in their hands. With the later skill of experience, they achieve their own designs, which seem to grow under their fingers as if inspired.



## THE ARTS OF BALI

The men do the stone work, and the woodcarving of idols, and the beams and ornaments of the temples; the women are more skilful in making the gold and silver work, such as is seen in the markets of Kloengkoeng.

Everything a Balinese owns, even to the smallest betel-nut box or *kris*, is skilfully created by hand. Every temple, house, utensil, piece of cloth, or jewellery is highly ornamented and decorated. This abundance of design must be inspired by the luxurious forests and flowers around them.

Every Balinese woman owns many *batik kains*; and at least one *prada*. These *pradas* are lengths of hand-woven silk, so heavily appliquéd with gold and silver leaf designs that they are literally "worth their weight in gold." These *pradas* are kept in the family cupboards and reserved exclusively for use at temple ceremonies.

Vivid friezes of canvas are painted to picture epics such as the *Ramayana*. The Balinese astrological calendars that are seen in temples are most interesting canvas paintings of events in the lives of the gods.

The art of writing first came to Bali from India many centuries ago. The temple books or *lontars* are written in Sanscrit, the holy language of the Hindus, more than two thousand years old.

One day we made a visit to the "*lontar* man" and watched him cutting pages out of perfect palm leaves. He used only the finest greenish-white leaves. With a thin stiletto, he cut the leaves into exact oblongs,

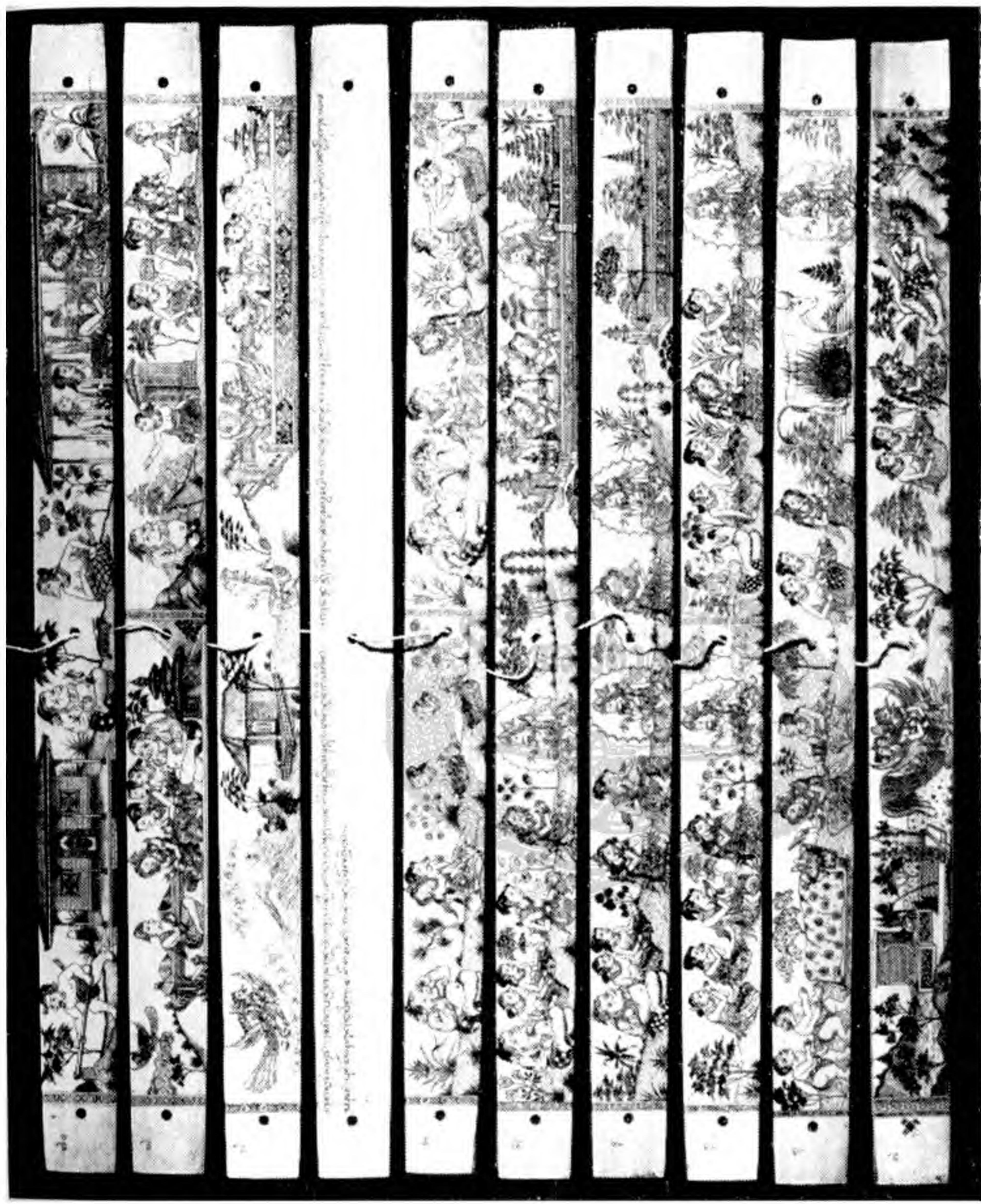


about three inches wide by twenty-four inches long. With great skill, he outlined the designs that were to illustrate the script. He used a sharp knife-like instrument that scratched the design into the page. The slightest mistake, and the page was ruined. When he was satisfied with a page, he sprinkled a black powder, like graphite, over it, smoothed this into the scratched lines, and the outlines became set and black, like ink. When the final work was completed, the page was polished, and the writing and drawing became permanent. In a *lontar*, the pages are so arranged that one page is covered with drawings illustrating the page facing it.

When all the pages are ready, a hole is made through each end of the bundle and the leaves are corded together, so that you may turn them over like a book. Finally, they are enclosed between two covers made of thin slabs of sweet-scented wood like the tamarind. The covers are carved in delicate relief motifs and painted red and gold. The finished article is a book worthy of a museum.

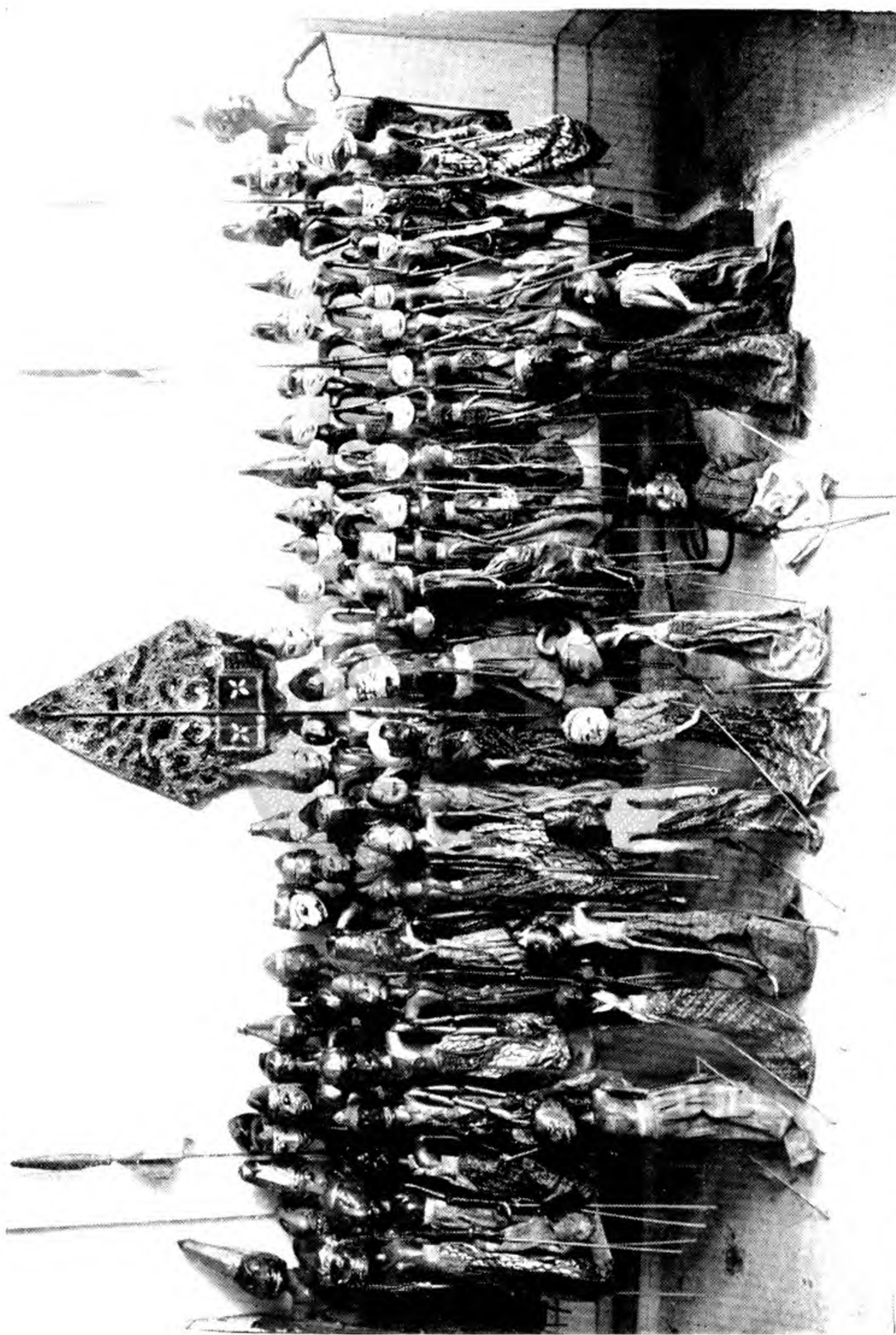
Every temple in Bali has its treasury of *lontars*, which are read aloud by the priests by the light of the moon during temple services. I would have liked to hear more of the translated stories of those old *lontars*, but only the highly-educated priests who read and write Sanscrit can understand the deep spiritual thought of the ancient Hindu myths and philosophies of the *lontar* books. The common people of the fields who worship at the temples do not pretend to understand the Hindu chanting from the holy books—any more





A *lontar*, the only kind of book in Bali. Its "pages" are leaves of palms strung together with cords. The Sanscrit letters are etched into the green leaf with a fine-pointed instrument and the powdered ink bark is rubbed into the writing. Note the fourth "page," which has been turned over to show the ancient script. The illustrations are remarkable for free-hand drawing. The magic bird is described in the story translated by the author in this book.





A complete puppet show of Balinese *Wayang Golek* dolls made of thin Albizzia wood garbed in *batik* skirts and fantastic jewellery. They represent characters from old Hindu epics and Javanese folk-lore. These little travelling shows go from village to village and are shown at night by torchlight.



than the average Catholic understands the Latin litany of his priests. Yet they are able to absorb much beauty and reverence from the chanting.

The splendid *lontar* that Mr. Caron ordered for me in Bali contains the popular old story of the magic "Garoeda Bird." It is such a quaint fairy-tale myth that I am going to translate it here for you:

"Raden was the young and dazzling daughter of a powerful Prince named Yaksendra. Her beauty was so entrancing that all the young swains of the kingdom came to woo her, and she was the very apple of her father's eye. But, ah!—she would have nothing to do with the young suitors at all. She seemed to have no heart whatever.

Then one night she dreamt of a handsome knight named Mantri, who came from Koripan to steal her heart and take her away on a magic bird. She was so thrilled with the dream that the next day she prayed that it might come true. Fortunately it did, and she fell instantly in love with the strange charmer from Koripan. Within an hour they had planned to elope and evade her powerful father—who would be most annoyed because she had turned down his suitors.

But Princess Raden was not the daughter of a great Prince for nothing. She invented a scheme to persuade her father to go off on a long expedition in search of the magic Two Hundred Precious Stones—among them, the Gala-stone, the Water-opal, the Fire-jewel, and the Soul-stone, each of which had *very* special powers of magic.



The old Prince, not able to refuse his favourite daughter anything, set out on the search to make her happy. But he returned far sooner than she had expected—and he brought back, not only two hundred, but *six* hundred jewels of rare and wonderful power! Delighted, the Princess accepted them, tucked them in her girdle, and planned a new ruse to make her father leave again, so that she and her love could escape.

This time she asked her father to wash her green silken dress white again. And the moment he had left, she and her Knight started. They knew it was hopeless to try to escape without some magic aid, so they called upon the help of the Garoeda, the great bird belonging to the god Vishnu.

Vishnu, seeing from on high the lovers' plight, allowed his giant bird to descend from heaven. He told them to step upon its broad back with all their servants and possessions . . . and away they flew.

But they had forgotten the all-seeing magic eye of her father, the Prince. As soon as he saw them flying away on the heavenly bird, he was furious and drew aim to kill the bird.

In terror, the Princess bethought herself of the supernatural jewels in her girdle. Choosing the Gala jewel, she threw it down, and at once a bamboo forest sprang into existence, blocking her father's path. But he, wise man, cut down the whole forest with one fell swipe of his magic sword.

Frightened, the Princess threw down the Water-opal, and a great blue ocean flooded the land. Again,



with one whopping swallow, her enraged father drank down the ocean and thought nothing of it!

Almost in despair, the Princess threw down the Fire-jewel, which created a roaring fire that lit the earth. But merely spouting the ocean that he had drunk, her father put out the flames with one pout, and wiped his hands of such trifles.

At last, at her wit's end, the little Princess, remembering that she also had the famous Soul-stone, threw that down, not realizing that it would end her father before her eyes. When Raden saw her father fall dead, she realized what she had done and tears flowed from her beautiful eyes. She requested the Garoeda bird to descend, and she wept over her father and did him the last honours of all good Hindus—that of cremating the corpse.

While his body was being burned, her father's soul became a god. And as a god, the Prince asked his daughter with whom she had felt justified in eloping.

The brave young Knight came forward thinking to appease the spirit of his sweetheart's father. The Knight spoke of his great love for the Princess. As further proof of his sincerity, he said that he wanted to build a beautiful seven-roofed *meroe* (temple) in honour of the spirit of Yaksendra.

The heart of the spirit Prince was touched. He forgave the young couple and showered his blessings upon their union, and they lived happily ever after."



## CHAPTER VII

### STRANGE ADVENTURES

THROUGH the influence of one of my Dutch friends, the native chief of the district I was visiting invited us to his Shadow *Wayang* show. It was held in an open pavilion near a temple, just a short way down the winding road from my rest-house.

At dusk, the deep-throated boom of the *Gong* sounded through the ravine, and all over the countryside little families of natives answered the call of the ever-amusing puppet show.

On the outskirts of the crowd, we stopped at the small food-stalls under the flare lights. Full-bosomed damsels with bright cloths around their heads had turned "merchant men," calling out their wares in high-pitched voices. Their temporary stands were heaped with fruited sweet-meats, sticky pastilles made of guavas and honey, coloured syrup drinks, nuts, and betel-smoking accessories. All natives in Oriental countries (and the Balinese are not unique in this respect) seem to enjoy eating and munching, continuously, every hour of their waking time!

The Shadow *Wayang* is the cinema of Bali. In the large outer courtyard of a temple, a big white sheet had been hung on a frame, like a movie screen. Behind it, a large oil lamp lit up the white surface upon which the "cut-work" leather dolls were to be silhouetted.



Below the lamp, the puppet master, called the *dalang*, sat cross-legged on the ground, before his miniature stage.

You would never believe that a stage could be evolved from a green banana-tree trunk—but it made an excellent one, laid horizontally, and propped up at each end on strong forked branches. Into the juicy stalk, the showman arranged the pointed sticks of his puppets in the order of their appearance.

Several little boys—the stage hands—passed the puppets along as their cues came, without uttering a word and scarcely moving their eyes from the master. When all the caricature dolls had been taken out of their red trunk and stuck into proper procession to the right of “stage centre,” the show began with a clashing of cymbals.

The puppet master cleared his throat and started his prologue with all the finesse of professional showmanship. He was a whole show in himself! That little brown man was a wizard; he acted with his mouth, with his hands, and with his feet! As he chanted the old Hindu legends, he made his voice now gruff, now gentle, according to the character of the puppets. At the same time, he manipulated the dolls in the most life-like manner. As a side-play, he accompanied the puppets’ actions with expressive sounds on clusters of cymbals which he flipped with his *toes*!

I have a family of puppets at home, and repeatedly I have tried to make them “act” as the *dalang* did. But they simply flop on the job. One has only to attempt the antics of the puppet master to realize his skill.



Crash! went the cymbals. The first character was Arjuna, as popular a movie star in the Balinese firmament, and as clever a Don Juan as John Barrymore or Clive Brook. In nearly every story, Arjuna is the hero, slaying villains to left and right. When the *dalang* trotted the figure of Arjuna on the stage, that silly doll of sticks and cloth literally came alive.

Clash! again. Arjuna was up to mischief. He had stolen the Queen of the Lencas, and the Monkey King with all his army were in pursuit! The long-nosed Monkey King danced up and down and waved his arms in fury—driving his men on to catch that Romeo of an Arjuna. Children nearly fell over themselves in their excitement, and that audience whooped for Arjuna as the story rose to exciting battle. Bewailing my slowness to understand, I hung on every word of explanation that the Controller dropped in my extended ear. But the natives seemed to know the stories by heart. The show lasted until midnight and all evening little families came and went, staying until they got sleepy.

The *wayang* is very real drama to the Balinese. The trials of Arjuna made the audience chuckle and weep. Two clown characters, Semar and Turas, with bulging noses, kept up a running fire of comic absurdity throughout the story to prevent monotony. Bhima and Citraksa are two other favourite characters of the *wayangs*.

I had examined the puppet dolls before the show, and was surprised to see how cleverly they were made. Those of the daytime shows were miniature figures of men and women, modelled of wood, and artistically



painted and dressed in *batiks* and jewellery; but the shadow *wayang* puppets of the night shows were entirely different. They were cut out of tough buffalo hide with sharp tools into lacy "cut-work" silhouettes. They were all caricatures, with long thin arms, protruding noses, and humped shoulders.

An amusing incident is often told in Bali of an ambitious Armenian who thought he'd make a fortune introducing American movies to the natives. He took over a run-down building in Singaradja, and circulated vivid stories of the new shows he was bringing from America. The news spread in the magic way it does in all Oriental countries, and the opening night, the show-house was so packed that the avaricious business man rubbed his hands and congratulated himself on his sagacity.

It seems that natives the world over are avidly curious. But, once the curiosity of the Balinese is satisfied, they go peacefully about their business again. So it was with the movie novelty. They came once,—to see,—and when the programme changed in a few days, the show-house was empty. No amount of coaxing, price reduction, or forcing could make the natives accept the strange "foreign" *wayangs*.

Another proof, it seems to me, that Bali will not be spoiled by foreign inventions. It is a unique island, and the people are content with their own ways; the tropic languor is not conducive to ambitions, and as soon as curiosity over a novelty is appeased, the natives will have no more of it.



The following day, we made a visit to Kesiman, where I had seen my first night temple offering. This was a handsome temple in the daytime, too. The usual big chairs to the gods were bright red and blue and gold, except where the moss had grown over the paint. I learned to be very fond of those nice gods who make life such a happy existence for the island people. I think I'd like to take on some of their simple philosophy myself.

In the lazy afternoon, we drove to the holy bathing place called Tirtha Empoel. This pool of water is kept holy by the priests, who come in a procession to bless it periodically. And every time there is a cremation, the *wadahs* or funeral towers are paraded through this holy pool to be purified in order that the soul may surely go to *Indraloka*, the Balinese Heaven.

High above the pool at Tirtha Empoel, the Dutch have built an attractive rest-house on the cliff overlooking the water and the countryside below. There is not a more restful spot on the island, and I had the most comfortable room one could ask for.

A young Dutch couple stopping there asked me to join them, early in the morning, to watch the natives bathing in the pool below. Early, in Bali, means *extra-early*. Several times I had tried to catch these "dawn" bathers at their ablutions, but always we had come upon the last of the stragglers filling their water-jars, and already starting off for the day's work.

A reliable travelling alarm-clock will terminate the soundest of tropical slumbers. How deeply one sleeps





**The puppet plays are most popular in Bali and Java. This sheikh, Arjuna, is garbed in *batiks*, bead tassels, and spangles. And how the children shout when he wins the princess!**





**The author, with one of the gay little puppets from Bali. The cleverly made wooden mask is the sort used in the *Wyang Wond*, travelling comic theatrical troupes of natives.**



in these warm countries. It is like the sleep of one's childhood—that dreamless slumber from which the soul floats back to the surface as out of deep water.

The dewy countryside was worth the effort of early rising. Below, from our look-out cliff, the green world was still shrouded in the pearly mist of night, though it was rapidly melting away before the onslaught of the tropical sun.

We approached the pool quietly, and this time were rewarded to find the whole neighbourhood bathing club splashing in its tub, half a block square.

This bathing process is a matter of cleanliness, as well as a social gathering. Old and young use powdered stone for soap, and pulverized ashes for polishing their teeth. A nice rock that jutted out from the fountain-head made an ideal back-scratcher. I thought it was a far better bathing arrangement, on the whole, than our poor "sluicing" drop of a bath in the rest-house.

For half an hour, the mountain-sides were decorated with natives in their bright *kains*, coming down the lanes with water-jars on their heads. The tiny toddlers, having no *sarongs* to unwind, were in the cool water first, full of the importance of their bath. The women bathed quickly and in a business-like way, then twisting their *kains* about their waists, and filling their clay bowls with the spring water, they departed on their way within a few minutes.

I made a perfect "scoop" with my camera that morning. Bali is so colourful and picturesque on every



side that it is a photographer's paradise. I used my whole journey's supply of films in my first week in Bali. I took a chance on the local supply, which came fortified in tin containers. Luckily, they turned out clear and sharp, and I was able to bring home lasting mementoes of those happy days in Bali.

We had an exciting moment, later in the morning, when I scrambled to get out of the car to capture a snapshot of a walking *dragon*. You are likely to meet any kind of animal along the roads of Bali,—forest beast, wandering domestic buffaloes, or cloth monstrosities bound for the temples.

This morning, we nearly collided with a fancy animated dragon with a giant head and long whiskers. This long cloth monster of red and gold is called a *barong*. The head was one of the big ugly masks which wag from side to side, occasionally stretching its mouth wide and shutting with a "Clack!" of wooden jaws. Its bulging white eyes were as big as electric lights.

It was really a very nice dragon; it stopped and posed for our camera as if flattered at our attention. And then went weaving along the road, supported by several pairs of brown legs, which, I imagine, the demon gods are supposed to overlook as "dragon flippers."

"Somewhere I think we find cremation," offered our chauffeur, eager as always to find excitement for us. "When you see dragon on road, you follow him, you always find something—I think cremation."



He did his best to keep us interested, this treasure of a brown lad with the tricky head-cloth. If only he had not possessed such a passion for *durian*!

We dropped all plans for the morning and followed the dragon down the road, of course. That's the joy of not having to follow too definite an itinerary in travelling. If you see a wayside temptation which looks promising, you can defer your visit to another place and "follow the crowd"—the way we do to a fire at home. In this way, I "happened" on the best things of my whole journey. And if I hadn't followed these impulses, I'd have to go back to Bali again to track them down.

The chauffeur was right; we found the next village all agog,—building a bamboo *wadah*, the tall funeral tower in which the dead is carried to the funeral pyre. In one courtyard, the natives were reproducing the whole paper family of the deceased. All of the possessions are made in paper, and burned with the body,—a wobbly paper horse with a wicked eye, and even a paper wife who could mercifully burn on the husband's pyre instead of the flesh-and-blood wife.

But alack,—the cremation was not to take place until the *pedandas* had had a long feasting time between themselves to decide a propitious day for the affair. The chauffeur promised to keep his ear to the ground and let us know when the day was decided, so that we might return for the cremation.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WOMEN OF BALI

BALI is a land of Women. They predominate in the population by at least seventy per cent. There have always been so many more girl children than boys that the old prophets claimed the mineral content of the spring water had something to do with this preponderance of femininity.

So there is no "single standard" in Bali. The women predominate, are the "business men" of the island, and they have equal voice in the matter of selecting their mates; yet they do not dominate in authority. They probably don't know what suffrage means. In Bali, the heaviest tasks fall to the women. The men are good farmers and excellent engineers in irrigating the land, but all the rest of the struggle for life is left to the women.

And these women are so lovely to look upon that we feel that surely on this island, God made man—and woman—in His own image and likeness. It seems the original Paradise. Unspoiled by tight clothing or too much civilization, these outdoor people, with their clean, brown bodies exposed to the sun, are the most "natural" people I have ever seen.

"A modest woman has nothing to hide," is the theory of Bali. The first days you are on the island your eyes nearly pop out at the sight of so many "Eves,"—but



## THE WOMEN OF BALI

after a few days of seeing these bronzed natives, busy about their living, entirely unconscious of their bared beautiful breasts, you no longer notice them. Their dark skin seems like a garment. Only the prostitutes and female oracles (*balian*s) cover their breasts with the *kabaju* (jacket).

These women are friendly and you rarely see grieving or unhappiness among them. You are sure of a welcome wherever you go. A few words of Malay and you find yourself surrounded by smiling, chattering women—some carry babies at their breasts: all carry burdens.

The women are a race of workers and walkers—and from generations of living out of doors they have become as strong and hardy as their men. They can carry anything on their heads without holding it with their hands; consequently, they have developed an easy, gliding, undulating gait. Straight and slender as young saplings and gracefully rounded, they are lovely to look upon.

No wonder Balinese women are acclaimed the most beautiful native women in the world. While they are young, they are tall and lithe, with splendidly-shaped shoulders, legs, and hips—regal in bearing and with shapely hands and feet. As they swing along the forest paths, with the glint of the sun on their broad shoulders and full-cupped breasts, they seem the natural daughters of Eve.

For everyday wear, the Balinese woman binds her hips in a long strip of *batik* cloth called a *kain*, similar



to the *sarong* in Java. This *kain* is draped around the hips in a skilfully arranged fold in front which stays miraculously in place, allowing the long ends to fall in graceful flowing lines to the ankles. Above the waist, they go bare, except for festive occasions, when they wear a gauzy embroidered short jacket called a *baju*, made of a thin fabric not unlike the *pinia* cloth of the Philippine woman's dress.

The number of *kains* and the amount of jewellery a Balinese woman owns determines the wealth of her husband. In some parts of the island, the women weave their own *kains* on primitive hand-loom, in a dark-blue-and-white checked pattern. But the *batiked kain* is more highly prized for its bright colours and flowered designs. Most of these *batiks* are imported from Java, where the finest are painted by hand and the cheaper ones printed by machine.

If you have ever seen *batik* made in Jockjakarta or Surakarta, the chief centres of the industry in Java, you know what a complicated process it is. First, the design, usually a Hindu pattern with a meaning, is traced on the natural-coloured cotton cloth with hot beeswax, either by brush or by a tiny copper tool called a *jantung*. Then the cloth is dipped in the first dye bath of the lightest colour to be used—probably a lemon yellow. When it is dry, the next set of designs are filled in with the wax. After that, it is dyed again, and wherever the yellow dye is covered with wax, the darker dye won't *take*, because the wax, being stiff and greasy, resists the liquid dye. This



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process goes on until many colours are dyed and re-dyed. Finally, the cloth is cleaned in gasoline, and the designs are revealed in their brilliant colours.

I brought home many varieties of *batiks*, which I use for tea cloths, wall hangings, pillows, bed-spreads, etc. The best ones are those which have been used for a long time, as they acquire a velvety kid-skin finish with many washings. The navy-blue-and-white and the brown-and-white ones are more apt to be the hand-made ones, while the vivid ones are often machine-printed. You can always tell the hand-made *batiks* by their soapy slippery feel in the fingers as a result of the many dye baths they've been through.

A good hand-made *batik* is worth from twenty to forty *guilders*, while the machine-made ones may be bought as cheap as cotton goods. The Dutch pawnshops have a sale every so often, and by inquiring, you can often pick up very attractive old *batiks* for very little.

The Balinese men, like the Javanese, wear distinctively-tied head-cloths of *batik*. They are arranged differently in various sections of the island; for each province has its own style and favourite colours. This makes it possible to recognize a man's place of birth by the kind of turban he wears. Sometimes, the head-cloth is of dark-blue-and-white *batik* folded with a little end left hanging at the back, and sometimes it is of a rich brown and yellow bound around the head in pleated folds, and tied in a stiff knot in front, like a Hindu's twisted turban.



Almost all the younger women of Bali have good features, eyes so large and black as to deserve the term "sloe-eyed," rather aquiline noses, firm necks, and long glossy black hair. They've never even heard of bobbed hair in Bali. Every woman, unless she's a grandmother, has a mass of blue-black hair falling well below the waist when loose. They usually wear it simply, without pins or bandings, in a soft roll coiled on the neck.

I've watched them dressing each other's hair, and they have a unique way of tying it in a "double" knot which holds in place securely. An unmarried girl must leave a loose lock of hair, hanging like a tassel, below the knot at the back. When the girls are dancing in the temples, they deck their hair with flower heads in bandeaux across their foreheads.

From the first, I was captivated with the large round white earrings the women wore, which made such a striking effect against their black hair. Imagine my surprise when I found these handsome earrings to be nothing more than coils of young white palm leaf, rolled tightly into little tubes which were pushed into the ear-lobe. The "spring" in the green leaf kept the ear-lobes large,—the style in Bali. The ears are pierced when the children are young,—and in that part of the ear which has few nerves, so that it hurts very little.

A thing which puzzled me was how these women could carry such heavy burdens on their heads without having them slip or wobble about. But after watching them





Even the Balinese girl who sells *sirih* (tobacco) in the market-place is a beautifully formed child of Nature with shining cocoa skin and lovely dark eyes.





Part of the author's collection of *batiks*, in lovely shades of red, indigo blue, and tobacco brown. Each section of the island has its special colour of *batik sarong*. Most of these *batiks* were bought for a few guilders apiece from the Government "Pawn."



unload their baskets at a village market one day, I found that they have a clever arrangement. Before they lift the burden upon their heads, they arrange a soft length of cloth in a circle on top of their hair to serve as a cushion. In this way, they seem to ease the weight, so that they can carry the heaviest baskets of grain on their heads for hours at a time.

The children of Bali are always a delight to the visitor from foreign lands where children are spoiled beyond endurance. In Bali, the little ones never seem to bicker or quarrel, or have the familiar tantrums of our white children.

Maybe it is because every child has his proportionate share of family duties. If it isn't mother to help, there's always a smaller sister or brother to take care of; for Balinese families are generous. This seems to make for a community spirit, even among the toddlers.

And it is amazing what talent they show, while they are still in their teens. Their small efforts are never laughed at, by their parents, either. From the time a child first shows an interest in drawing, he is encouraged to make pictures in the sand, or to make little images of mud, to train his growing fingers.

Little girls of six and seven watch their mothers and then braid and twine cunning wreaths and tassels and stars of flowers for temple decorations that outdo our laciest valentines.

As the children grow older, they are taught all the details of temple management, as well as how to plant rice and irrigate the *sawahs*. Side by side, they work



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with their parents, so that when they have reached the age of thirteen or fourteen, they are proficient in all the arts of Bali.

From the time they are old enough to be taken to the temples, the children of Bali are taught to be seriously devout in their prayers. The little ones are proud to be allowed to take their places beside their mothers and fathers, and kneel and chant as they do.

Children seem happy all the day, in this idyllic land.

Mothers and fathers have a strange philosophy in regard to bringing up their little ones. They always treat them as equals—as miniature men and women, with their own small responsibilities in the field and home.

If a child longs too much for something, his parents set about at once either to satisfy the desire, if possible, or gently to reason with the child that he must be content with what the gods have given. For the Balinese parent fears that extreme danger—the child's soul *flying away with longing!*



## CHAPTER IX

### NATIVE LIFE

"NEVER mind the scenery," said a travelling journalist friend of mine, when he heard I was going to Bali, "but get about among the people and see the native life." And of course, it is true that the native life and customs are the richest source of interest to the traveller.

In Boelcleng where you arrive, you don't see the natives at their best. They are too near to commercialism; necessarily, since Singaradja is the headquarters of the Dutch officials and the one steamship office. But in the south, around Den Pasar, you see them living in the same primitive conditions that have existed since medieval days. In Kloengkoeng, the largest native centre of Bali, the women are the belles of the island, and their ceremonies are more colourful than in other sections; though Moendoek and Gitgit are fascinating smaller native villages in the romantic region of the mountain lakes.

In their native homes, the Balinese are a people of simple living and simple pleasures. They seem to be naturally a light-hearted race, always laughing and free, always picnicking or making a pilgrimage to some secluded temple in the forest.

In appearance, the natives, though not very tall, are lithe and statuesque in build. They are perfectly proportioned. Their complexion is a soft brown in colouring, and the majority have fine Aryan features



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and the high cheek-bones and well-formed nose and brow of their Hindu ancestors. Their hair is slightly wavy, and their eyes dark and liquid.

The men seem to have the happiest lot in Bali; you nearly always see them laughing in little groups along the road, or eagerly betting on a cock fight. While the women are the more serious sex, probably because they have most of the work and responsibility on their shoulders.

An unmarried Balinese man has no rights in the village law-making; so it behoves the young Balinese to marry early. Bachelors are almost unknown in the island,—for the life of a married man with a strong wife to carry the family burden is by far the easiest existence. If a man has two or three wives—his standing is both important and prosperous.

Perhaps that is why the men are the coquettes of Bali. They're the ones who put on the airs—gloss their hair and stick red and white oleanders above their ears—stain their finger-nails and wear the gaudiest loin cloths of purple and orange! They are like the preening cocks that they fondle.

Cock fighting is one of the chief interests in life to the Balinese Beau Brummel. All through the village lanes, groups of laughing youths squat around their pet cocks in bamboo cages and bet—while the women earn the money in the market-place to pay for their losses.

In this romantic background of Bali, the women being so beautiful, and life so easy, the casual traveller



is likely to think there is a good deal of promiscuity between the young members of the two sexes. But the boys and girls are taught to keep in their own groups. In the bathing pools, men, women, and children have separate sections, and even at the native theatres the men and women sit apart, though the children mingle.

Of course there is a time for courtship. That is the time of rice harvesting, when all the young men and women gather in the temples for thanksgiving. Here the young swain picks out the girl of his choice, and if she returns his affection, the real courting begins. Usually, it is the girl who decides the question, for she has a right to refuse the man if she is not satisfied with the match.

The groom must pay a certain price to the bride's parents before the wedding is solemnized. The price of a bride may be fixed at two cows, fifty *ringits*, or twenty-five pigs . . . the amount of money varies from forty to a hundred *guilders*; a woman is seldom worth more than three good buffaloes. Occasionally, a very beautiful girl sought by two swains may run the price up to three or four hundred *guilders*. The preliminary settling of the price question is called the *mepadik*. A third party, called a "go between," does the arranging between the two families, much as is the Chinese custom. In the case of a poor-but-honest lover, the difficulty is sometimes overcome by the son-in-law hiring out his services to his father-in-law for a given period of time.

After two young people express their wish to form



a new household, the parents on both sides are consulted for permission. Runaway elopements are in order in Bali, too; but the old Balinese law does not recognize a marriage in which the parental consent is not given.

For days before a formal wedding, great preparations are made for the nuptial feast. Special cloth is woven, baskets are plaited and painted red and gold, meats and rice cakes and roast pigs, ducks, and chickens are baked in quantities. Usually a mammoth turtle is captured, for turtle soup is the supreme delicacy of the island.

Meanwhile, the priests appoint a propitious day. The ceremony takes place in the village temple, which has been specially adorned for the occasion. All the families assemble and the bride, dressed in gilded clothes and jewels, is carried in a golden chair to the temple.

The *pedanda* reads the marriage vows with all the solemn pomp of English High Mass. Then he turns and presents the bride and groom each with a coconut and an egg. They must dash these to pieces on the ground; and then pick up the broken shells and toss them over their heads in the four directions, east, west, north, and south—for luck in their marital venture. (Much as we toss salt over our left shoulder.) It is symbolical, of course,—the ceremony of tossing the shells to the winds of heaven supposedly propitiating the spirits of the world in whose hands lies the happiness of the young couple.



Then the priest sprinkles the pair with holy water—drenching them so liberally that they are forced to change their garments, in separate chambers. While they are away, the crowd drinks a toast to their happiness. Then the couple return and the final rite is completed—that of feeding each other with the typical Balinese meal, rice and hot spices served on a banana leaf. This is a symbol that now they have started their everyday life together. Then the merry party leaves for the home of the bride's parents where the real feasting takes place.

When the marriage is consummated, the groom becomes a prominent figure in his community and is asked at once to join the Assembly or Council which meets once a month to settle all the problems of village life.

The first duty of the Balinese wife is to provide her husband with a son. The whole village celebrates the pregnancy festival near the approaching advent of a woman's first-born child.

The superstitions of these people run to deplorable lengths. If a wife brings forth twins, and they are not both boys, the whole family and ancestors are under a curse. The wife and her new offsprings must be moved to a temporary abode in the *cemetery*, and the house of her husband must be burned to the ground to prevent further misfortune from the evil spirit that must have invaded the wife's body. Special services are held in the temple, and the village is sprinkled with holy water by the priests in an expiatory ritual.



And woe to the woman who bears a malformed child ! The whole village is cast under a spell, and for a time there is no laughter, and all the temples are closed.

The women bear the heaviest brunt of superstition, but even the man about to become a father must abstain from his greatest pleasures,—betel chewing, opium smoking, gambling, and even cock fighting—for nine months as a test of his paternal devotion.

But when a young mother presents her husband with a fine son, ah ! then there is great rejoicing and feasting, and presents from all the family. The husband rushes out to plant a new coconut tree,—the symbol of health and fertility in Bali. The growth of the young tree is closely associated with the health and happiness of the child.

The first four years of the child's life are filled with "careful blessings" under the watchful eyes of the village priest. After the baby is three days old, his troubles begin. He is washed in holy water and offerings are made to the gods to accept the new soul. Three months after birth, the child is ready for the christening service, and then his hair is cut to signify that already he is past the baby stage. The *Negang-sasihin* feast at this time is one of the most joyful occasions of the household. Then every six months thereafter, regular offerings must be made and each time the child must be carried to the temple. At last, at the age of four, the little one's ears are bored, for earrings, and he has then reached the age when he



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can attend the temple services by himself and take part in the village plays and dances. At puberty there is a great maturity feast called *Koeningan*. Then the teeth-filing ritual.

The Balinese have little trouble in raising crops as the soil is so rich in volcanic ash that it has the fertility of a rose garden.

The landscape of the lowlands is one continuous terrace after terrace of rice fields,—in all stages of growth, from the young green of the sprouting rice to the golden-brown stubble of the harvested grain.

The expert way in which the natives irrigate these vast rice lands, directing the water into them in such a way as to utilize every gallon, is no less than remarkable. The best engineers from Java and other countries have made special studies of the methods of Balinese irrigation, for it is a unique system of their own invention.

Long ago, they had such disputes over the distribution of their precious water supply in the dry season that the native chiefs formed clubs called *subanks*, with a Controller in charge whose duty was to rule the water. Only by such rigid control were they able to make the water suffice for every man's ground.

In the uplands, they built dams, called *weirs*, and at certain times of the moon (I'm sure the moon is involved in nearly every happening in Bali!) they opened the flood gates and watered all the land below. As each small *sawah* was flooded, the overflow



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ran into the field just below; hence their system of terrace formation.

For centuries this system has worked to perfection, and even to-day it is considered one of the finest natural types of irrigation in the world.





## CHAPTER X

### VILLAGE LAWS

THE Balinese have what might be called a communistic way of living. They help each other at harvest time, in their merry-making, and in any time of strife. When one man's rice is ripe, all his neighbours come to help him harvest it, each taking a share of the rice for his labour. And so, in turn, they help each other. Nobody is exceedingly rich; no one is poor. It is a well-known fact that there isn't a real beggar in Bali! And of what other places on earth can you make such an assertion?

Every village is apportioned so that each family contributes a certain amount of money, or the equivalent in rice, toward the upkeep of the irrigation system and the temples.

Another requirement of the temples is that relatives of old pioneer families must make pilgrimages to the graves of their ancestors at certain times of the year. These pilgrimages are made in the name of the village temples and financed by them, so that all share alike in the favour of the gods.

When occasional quarrels arise,—and they are usually petty arguments about religion or temple duties,—the question is settled in the famous “night court” of Bali called the *Bale-agoeng*. These night sessions are held on the council platform. It is simply a raised platform open on three sides, with a straw-



thatched roof; it is built near the main temple in each village. The insignia of the village,—a brightly painted design of many colours,—adorns the wall at the back of the judge's seat. Through the centre of the *agoeng* runs a low bench which looked like a table to me, but turned out to be the seat upon which the white-clad councillors sit when court convenes.

To attend one of these night-court sessions is a privilege not granted to many strangers. About ten o'clock on certain moonlight nights, every month, the *gamelan* calls the people to the *Bale-agoeng*, and every man named as councillor must attend or a fine is exacted.

All evening little groups drift into the council yard, for the court does not fully assemble until midnight, and a trial often lasts until dawn. (These people never seem to sleep at night, yet they look fresh when you see them on the roadsides going to market early in the morning. I often wondered when they arrange their sleeping time!)

Native spectators may attend the council if they contribute a share to the feast which takes place after the trial. Even the women come along, bringing their own mats to sit upon, and offerings to justice in the form of baked meats and fruits, bowls of drinks, and flowers to adorn the judge's bench.

About midnight, the councillors having gathered take their places along either side of the bench, in their special seats, with the old Chief Justice ruling at the head place of honour. One of the curious rules of the night court is that if any member finds he



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cannot possibly attend, he must send along his *kris* or his jacket, which is put in his seat to represent him.

The old chief raps for attention, calls the roll, and then chants the by-laws of the village. Everybody sits seriously intent, with eyes upon the judge. There is no light except moonlight, by which are read the ancient law-books dating from nobody-knows-how-many-centuries-ago. Each councillor reads, in turn, from the books in a full melodious voice, which carries clearly in the still night.

Not until the first rays of dawn is the spell of attention broken; then the trial is closed and the feast takes place, the crowd relaxes, and everybody talks in lively relief about the cases at hand.

Here are a few of the Balinese laws. There are strict fines as forfeits for the slightest misbehaviours in court. This strict discipline has the effect of bringing about a serious regard for law and order in Bali.

If a man cannot, for any reason, till his soil as the gods expect, he is allowed one year of grace during which time his neighbours till his land for him. After that, if he still does not work, his land is taken away from him and divided among the neighbouring villagers.

If either side overlooks any of the formalities of court proceeding, that side loses by default.

If a man dares to point a finger at the judge, it is considered an evil omen and calls for a fine of 4,000 *kopengs*! (This sounds a tremendous fine, but the large number is mainly to impress the natives. A *kopeng* being worth only a small portion of a Dutch cent,



the whole amount is scarcely worth one bag of rice, so you can readily figure that the fine is not a staggering amount.)

If any very important case comes up—a deed punishable by death, such as poisoning an enemy, setting fire to another's home, or stabbing someone, and the man is found guilty, then death is ordered "by *kris*." The Dutch have changed this penalty to "death by hanging," which to the Balinese belief is anything but an honourable death. When you hear the astounding way in which a prisoner helps to execute his own death sentence, you realize that in the eyes of his own people he has been allowed to die "honourably" of his own free will.

Surely "death by *kris*" is an honourable way to die—if indeed one has been so possessed of the devil that he has outraged his community and has been condemned to die by his fellow-men.

It is a strange and barbaric custom, but at least it has none of the ugly humility of hanging or electrocuting. On the day appointed, the doomed man robes himself in his best white loin girth and head-cloth, and arranges his favourite flowers in his hair. The town councillors accompany him to a burning pyre near the Temple of Death upon which his body is to burn after he is dead. At a certain spot, the prisoner is commanded to go down on his knees and offer up his last prayer to the gods for his soul. Then with solemn ceremony the final verdict of the court is read aloud from a palm-leaf scroll, and the edict is



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handed to the prisoner who sticks it into his belt at the back.

The man appointed as executioner marches forward and asks permission to do the deed, somewhat in this manner, but phrased in beautiful Balinese: "I commit this righteous deed, not because we hate you, but because the judges have imposed this end upon you as a just punishment for your deed. We are all friends in this land and I do not want to kill you without your permission. Please give me your consent that I may be cleansed of the performing of a just duty of our village life. Peace be with your soul in the next life."

The prisoner solemnly answers in a courageous voice with the one word—"Rarisang" ("Do your duty").

Immediately the executioner arises to the accompaniment of the *gamelan*, and begins to circle in a tortuous dance. (The dance seems to be used in every phase of Balinese life,—birth, joy, sickness, death.) Undulating and swaying, the dancer whirls round and round, faster and faster, and as his tempo increases, he slashes the air with his glittering, jewelled *kris*. With each whirl, his body draws closer and closer to the condemned man—until with a triumphant lunge, he plunges his dagger exactly through the heart of the victim who has bravely held up his breast for the onslaught. In such honourable death the soul is gently appeased and released from its curse by the redeeming bravery of the flesh.



## CHAPTER XI

### TEA WITH A RAJAH

EVERY day in Bali grew more fascinating as I learned about the people and customs and legends of the island. The big event of this week was a visit to the Palace of the Rajah of Giangar, accompanied by one of the young Dutch Controllers. I've visited many palaces in many lands, but never a more curious one.

The Giangar Rajah was a pompous old potentate, as corpulent and well-fed as his servants were thin and humble. His round cheeks fairly hung over his high-collared uniform, which was buttoned up in front in the Dutch style,—the buttons winking in the sun were *jewels*! Below the starched tight-fitting jacket hung the folds of a flamboyant *kain* of green-and-purple *batik*. A handsome *kris* stuck in his under-girdle at the back interfered somewhat with the straight-line silhouette of his uniform. How he enjoyed strutting about in that stiff Dutch jacket.

He seemed very flattered when I asked to take a picture; but on second thought he shook his head sadly and refused my request. Later my friend told me that ordinarily he is fond of being photographed, but that he happened to be wearing only his "third best" uniform that day, and he refuses to be photographed except in his full-dress regalia emblazoned with medals and coloured ribbons. Anyway, I got several snapshots of the fancy palace and its imposing



## TEA WITH A RAJAH

gates and gardens. And later, in one of the small stalls, I found a "full-dress" picture of the Giangar Rajah.

The palace was anything but true Balinese architecture. Built of stone with turrets and cupolas, it was as rococo as you might expect a native Rajah's palace to be. It was a museum of red-and-gold bric-à-brac. Elaborate carved and gilded furniture was quite obviously made to be gazed upon rather than to be sat upon. I had heard that white tablecloths and American cut glass were seen on the Rajah's table for formal occasions.

The Rajah personally accompanied us on an inspection of the rooms which were too artfully arranged ever to have been lived in.

The most comical object of the collection was a huge "gold" bed. The Rajah pointed out this bauble with evident pride and a flourish of long finger-nails. If he hadn't repeated several times that the bed was "gold," I'm sure I should have thought it a relic of the square brass beds of our Golden Oak period. At all events, the bed was kept nicely made-up the year round, and covered with a crocheted and tassel-hung Dutch spread. It was never slept in.

Across the bed lay an oblong sawdust pillow, known in the tropics as a "Dutch wife." If you ever go to Java you'll soon learn how popular a "Dutch wife" is. This round sausage of a pillow, tightly stuffed with



sawdust to present a hard cool surface, was invented by a Dutchman as the ideal sleeping companion. By throwing an arm and leg over the pillow, the air is allowed to circulate freely between the limbs, assuring comfortable slumber. Newcomers are apt to spurn these pillows, but when a sweltering night comes along, they succumb to the local custom, and eventually regard the "Dutch wife" with proper respect.

After inspecting the palace and grounds, we were treated to imported lemonade in yellow glass bottles. The cakes that accompanied it were also imported, little curlicue English biscuits out of a tin. I imagine these rare delicacies from seven thousand miles across the seas were taken down from the royal emergency shelf in honour of our "foreign" taste. I call that the height of hospitality, to offer us food and drink from our own country. Even the cigarettes were a famous Egyptian brand,—served out of a solid-gold box, encrusted with *rubies*.

But I was disappointed because we didn't see any of his twenty wives!

On our way back to the rest-house for dinner, we passed a queer-looking log hanging up in a tree, suspended by ropes from each end. I pointed to it and asked the chauffeur to stop. There are so many curious things around us here, over our heads and under our feet, that we have to keep our eyes wide open.

The log was the native's idea of a bee-hive. The hollowed-out log, with a bit of honey for a tempter,



is hung in a tree in a sheltered spot. Very soon, the bees discover it, and they build a cone of honey on the little "starter." When it's as large as the bees consider necessary to last them through a season, the native comes back with a banana-stem torch, smokes out the poor bees, and takes home a log full of honey for dessert.

One of the most interesting inventions I saw in both Java and Bali was the crude native telegraph system called a *tong-tong*. Each compound has a little watch-house in which hangs, suspended by a rope from the roof, a hollow tree-trunk, shaped and carved like some animal. This reverberating native "drum" is struck with a heavy mallet every hour of the day and night, serving as the village timepiece. The echo can be heard for miles. Until I actually saw one of the *tong-tongs* in use, I could never figure what made that booming sound at regular intervals during the night.

The amazing thing about this wooden telegraph system is, that in case of alarm or fire in the night, the native guard beats a heavy S O S on the drum, and instantly the surrounding community rises *en masse*. They can hear the regular hourly beat all through the night and never waken; yet at the first sharp *tonk-tonk* of a fire call they are aroused from the soundest slumbers.

This clever drum system also serves to spread the news from village to village; anything of importance which occurs is relayed on at once by a simple native code. For instance,—when I was visiting a Dutch



family in the hill-country near Buitenzorg, Java, it was about the time that the Javanese were asking for the right to vote. And the day the news came through that the right had been granted, the natives high in the hills around the estate were celebrating their victory in joy many hours before the official news came out. My Dutch host said that his native boys told him the news had come over the "drum."

Early the next morning, we started upon one of our long trips through the wooded interior—to see the Balinese sanctuary at Besaki. We had to leave our car high in the hills, and hire a pair of sedan chairs, with a quartette of strong native pole-bearers to carry us.

These sedan chairs were made in the most primitive style,—just common chairs were fitted between strong sapling poles and tied securely with ropes. The long poles were lifted upon the shoulders of the brown carriers, and off we went, our legs dangling in space. We were indeed grateful to our bearers as we proceeded up sharp inclines, but it was a breath-taking experience at moments, when we careened out over yawning caverns, and the whacking thumps suffered by our backbones were only comparable to riding a bouncing dromedary.

We climbed slowly and laboriously, higher and higher, until the purple valleys lay far below. At the very tip-top of the highest peak, we found a plain unpretentious wooden temple,—the mother temple of Bali. The natives must have gone to great trouble to



find this appropriate spot for the mountain-top home of the gods. This peaceful temple was devoid of all stone sculpture. Unlike the ornate temples of the villages, there were no fantastic images. The beauty of the place lay in its surroundings, set in the green niche of the mountain-side with a panorama of the whole Balinese world below.

*Pedandas* and pilgrims make their way to Besaki at least once a year for a period of meditation—to feast their souls on the beauty and tranquillity of this airy mountain-side, and to fête their gods with simple offerings for good fortune in the coming year.

Every new temple I see here makes me realize afresh how deeply spiritual a people are the Balinese. They take pride in building such a retreat as Besaki, without ornament, purely for meditation and spiritual communion. What monasteries of inspiration have we, in our world, where world-weary souls may retire and be renewed in the peace of Nature?

There is so much to tell about the temple life and festivals and beliefs of these people that I must digress a little from my own adventures to tell you about them in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XII

### BELIEFS OF THE BALINESE

IN Bali, the people and their customs are so bound about by Nature and their religion that they are inseparable. Far more than in any European country are the social and economic affairs of these people guided and controlled by their religious beliefs.

Every temple and every festival exist in honour of the gods of Nature. Every mountain-top, and grove of trees, lake, cave, or freak rock has its own temple to the spirit living there.

The great mountain peaks, Goenoeng Agoeng and the Goenoeng Batoe Koe, are revered for the gods who live in the mists above the peaks. And every lake in Bali has temples built about it—to the Desi Dewa,—goddess of the lakes. The Bat's Cave, and the Goa Lawa, a rock formation near Kosambe—all of these places are honoured with shrines to the deities who are supposed to inhabit these regions. Even the active, sputtering volcano, the Batoer, is thought to be the home of the devil god, *Butas*!

The Balinese religion is a curious mixture of Hinduism (Agama Ciwa) grafted onto primitive Animism, which is the real foundation of their belief. The most important god to the Balinese is Ciwa, god of the Sun, followed by Brahma and Vishnu. Ranga, the child-eating witch, is the goddess of Death.



To the Balinese, day is the symbol of the god of goodness and kindness, and night is the devil god who comes out of the forest to run rampant through the midnight hours; particularly on moonless nights does he "terrorize" with his black magic. To appease the dreaded devils of the night and keep them from entering the compound, every household has a watch dog,—preferably a stone "devil dog" with wicked eyes and protruding fangs. Next best as guards are the barking, live dogs one sees everywhere in Bali. These ugliest of mongrels have one virtue—there is no disease among them. They are loyal to their masters and fly into a snarling passion when a stranger enters the gates of the compound. The natives never fondle their dogs. Without affection, but with a keen sense of only one master, they are entirely satisfactory guards of the gateways.

At the first approach of twilight, the native woman of the house takes a small offering and puts it in the middle of the road before her home as a gift to *Butas* to keep him from entering the compound. I've happened on several of these little "devil" offerings—usually a little heap of red and white and brown rice on a banana leaf or in a shallow dried gourd. Sometimes, it's a brown sugar waffle, sometimes just a pair of hibiscus blossoms. If the night happens to be *very* dark and stormy, she may light a small oil wick afloat in a little clay lamp in the household shrine; this is to show the spirit the way in the dark. And if it is the end of the dry season, she thoughtfully leaves a



little jug of water in the road, in case old *Butas* is thirsty.

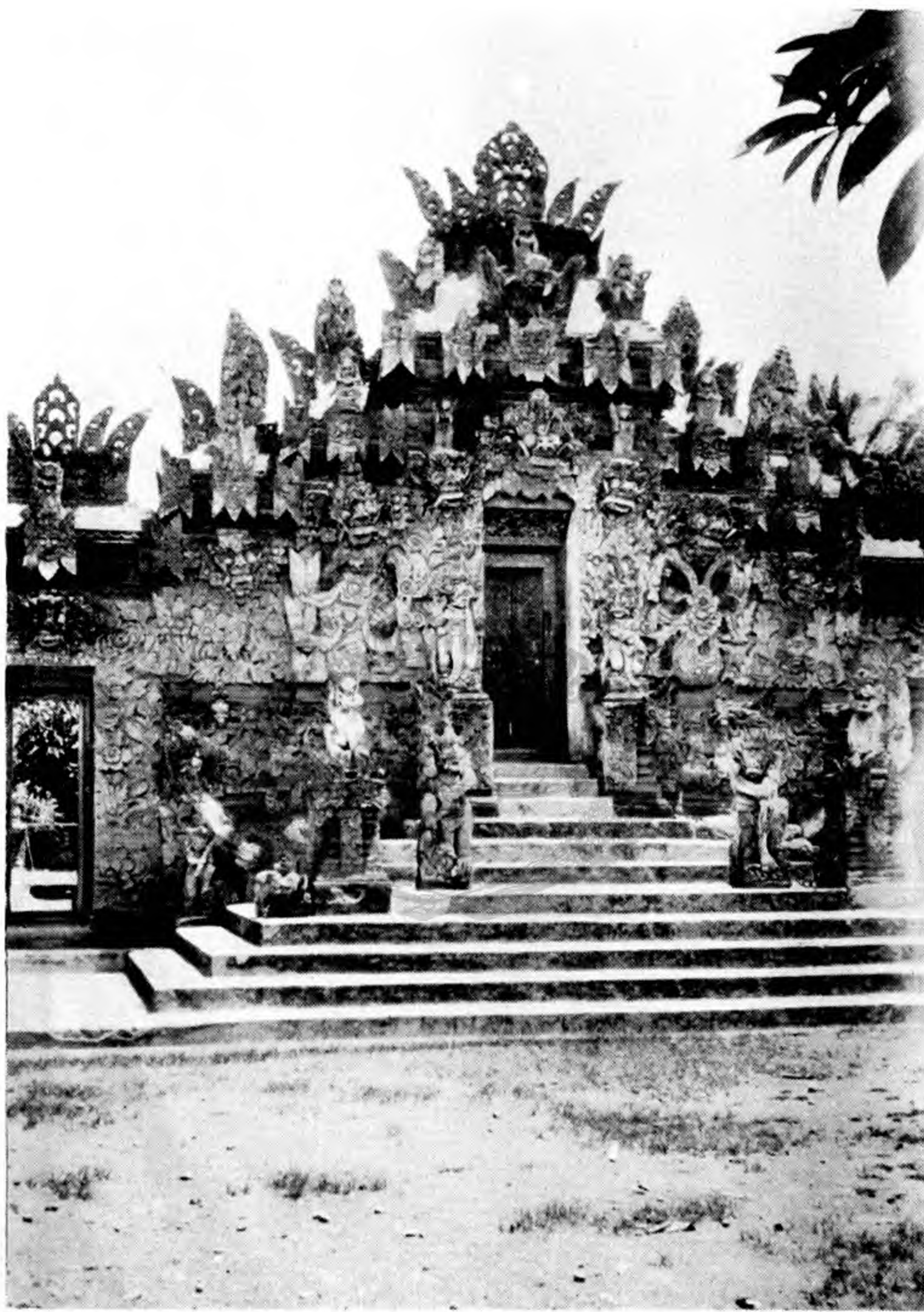
These are a few of the quaint customs of these superstitious people. They show how ever thoughtful they are of their gods. As they observe these little courtesies from childhood, it never occurs to them to question. Their crops are bountiful—life is sweet—so they have much to be thankful for. What more could man ask?

All their beliefs are as gentle,—such as the notion that a sleeping person must never be awakened rudely or abruptly, lest his soul should not have time to come back to the body from its wanderings in the Dream Country. They think that when a person is asleep his soul departs temporarily to the garden of the gods. When one is sick, they also believe that the soul is visiting in heaven and that it may wander too far and leave the body too long—and then death results.

One of the most refreshing of their beliefs is their rejoicing instead of grieving over death. They think the soul has only transferred its habitation to some other phase of life, the body having served its time on earth.

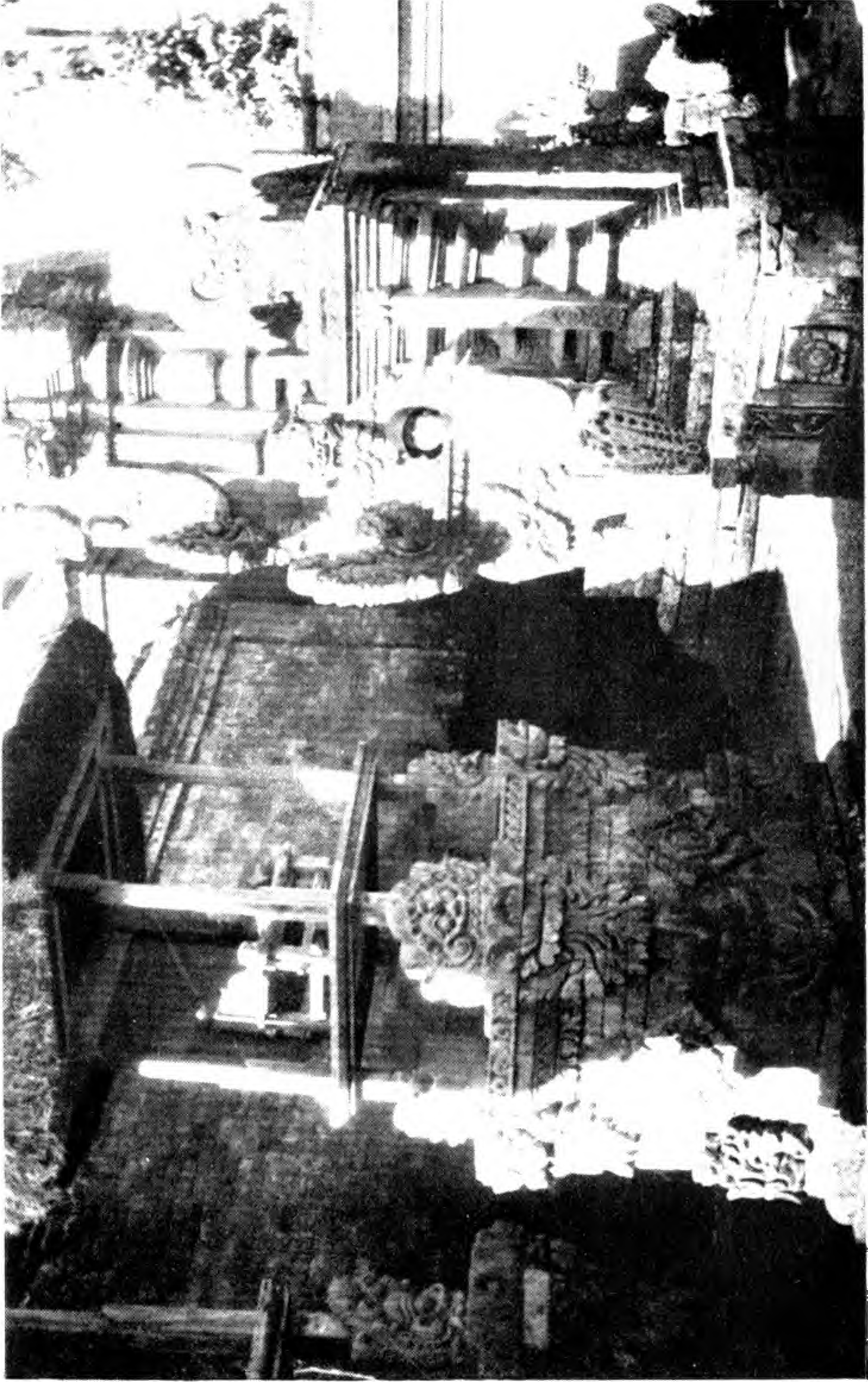
In Bali, there are no religious differences, no quarrelling over creeds, and no missionaries. The natives, having inherited the Hindu faith, have adjusted it to suit their own locality and disposition. In the main, they live a healthy outdoor life, existing mainly for their religion





Every village in Bali has its beautiful Hindu temple. This carved stone entrance leads into three inner courts and to the central "holy of holies," where the offerings are presented to the gods.





The gods' stone chairs. Usually a leaf of tit-bits is left as an offering for the god as he sits contemplating on high, invisible to his earthly worshippers.



and deriving their sustenance from the fields for which they give offerings every week in the year.

Instead of striving to amass a fortune as the white man does, the Balinese is content in his humble house in the shadow of the beautiful village temple which all enjoy.

Every family has its household shrine before which periodic offerings to the god are made in the form of dainties of coloured rice or fruit, and the palm-leaf rosettes woven by the children.

Even the humblest *sawah* of the poor man has its little "bird house" of a temple high on a bamboo pole, from which flutter palm ribbons to attract the attention of the god of rice.

Every month, each man in the village must contribute his share of rice toward the upkeep of the neighbourhood temple. Instead of the individual profiting, this community plan revolves around religion as the pivot of their lives and customs. The building of a temple worthy of the gods is the height of every man's ambition. The temples, the people, and Nature make one indissoluble whole. That is the charm of Bali.

If you were to compare the Hindu religion as it is practised in India to the way it is carried out in Bali, a great many variances would be apparent.

Authorities claim that the faith is actually purer in Bali. Hardly a field is planted without the blessings of the priests, either of the Hinduistic priests, called *Pedandas*, or of the Animistic priests, called *Dewas*;



these are the more common village priests. The Hinduism practised in Bali substitutes inanimate objects, food and floral decorations for the living sacrifices formerly demanded in India.

The complicated caste system of India has also been simplified in Bali. There are only four of the original Indian castes in Bali—the *Brahman* or holy caste of priests; the *Dewas* or royal members, descendants of the original line of rulers; the *Goesti* or middle class; and the common *Soedra* caste of the labouring class.

The priests have different ranks—the *Ciwa* priesthood with its *Pedandas* ranking highest; the Buddhist priests being a close second; followed by the *Dewa* or village priests; and last the *Pemangkus*, a remnant of an older order long ago existent in Bali when the chief of the village was also its priest.

The priests play such an important part in the life of the people that scarcely anything is undertaken without calling for their sanction. The *Dewa* priests are the most popular, for they have far more Animism and superstition in their ritual and this appeals to the Balinese.

There is no animosity among castes in Bali,—the only difference between castes being that of language. The common *Soedra* caste would have to use a higher type of speech when addressing one of the *Dewa* or *Brahman* caste.

The initial advent of foreign missionaries into Bali was a complete failure. The Dutch have now forbidden missionaries to land on the island. The Balinese have always been friendly to the Christian missionaries,



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they did not object to their being there, but they were simply indifferent to their teaching.

For years the Christians persisted in sending missionaries to the island, though they never succeeded in making any converts. Finally, in 1866, a new Protestant missionary was sent to Utrecht. He fell under the spell of the island people and became so zealous about converting them that he industriously learned their language and even studied their writing and lived as the natives did. But in the report he had to send to headquarters later, he had to own that he had only one convert, a half-wit whom they named Nikodemus.

Poor Nikodemus,—he liked the Bible stories that the missionary told him, and he allowed himself to be baptized, thinking it was quite an amusing rite. After Nikodemus was named a Christian, the missionary tried to prevail upon him to help convert other natives, saying they would surely burn in the hereafter if they did not become Christians. But the natives only laughed at the child-minded “Nik.”

By and by Nikodemus became lonely; he missed the evenings at the temples with the music and the feasts and his old friends, who did not speak to him any more. And every time he went near the missionary’s home, he grew afraid of his threats of hell and punishment.

Finally, his mind became so obsessed with fear, and homesickness for his own customs, that he felt like killing himself and ending the great mistake he had made. Half-demented, he left his village and wandered




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from place to place, trying to be accepted among the natives again. When they refused to have anything to do with him, he flew into a rage, and returning in the middle of the night, he killed the missionary.

The natives, to punish him, carried him in a bamboo cage all over the island as an example to the European authorities and to other natives. Nikodemus felt the disgrace, and to shield his own people, he kept repeating, "I am a Christian, I am not a true Balinese"—as if to excuse his deed.

In the end, the weak Nikodemus was executed and *buried*, not burned, as a lasting disgrace. In that way, his soul would for ever haunt the earth in pursuit of unfaithful Balinese. For the natives believe that the body must be burned to protect and liberate the spirit, and by burying Nikodemus, they had deliberately kept his soul out of *Indraloka*,—the Balinese Heaven.





## CHAPTER XIII

### TEMPLES AND FESTIVALS

EVERY moonlight night, I am sure there is a temple festival somewhere in Bali. There are many spirit gods, each with several feast-days to celebrate; there's the god of rain and grain to cajole when the sowing and the harvesting seasons are at hand. Each Village temple, Death temple, Sea temple, Lake temple, and Irrigation temple has its special festivals.

If there isn't a temple ceremony in actual progress then the village fires are likely to be busy roasting suckling pigs and baking rice cakes for a feast on the morrow. I never saw a white-robed *pedanda* but what he was either receiving the great cones of fruit offerings, or else clearing the temples of wilted blossoms and fruit husks from an offering of the day before. Life is just one feast after another to the Balinese.

When a new temple is built in Bali, all the men of the village help, and they work *without pay*, as part of their obligation to the community. Those who do not work, pay their monthly dues toward the upkeep of the temple in the form of a tax of rice or silver.

While in general most Balinese temples are alike, they are really as different to the native eye as two churches at home look different to us. One temple is dedicated to *Ciwa*—with black sandstone idols of the



god in every religious posture. Another temple is built around the trinity gods Ciwa, Brahma, and Vishnu, with tall stone altar chairs to these three. The temples of retreat set in some natural beauty spot of the forests are extremely simple in line. Temples like Sangsit go to the other extreme, of decoration with lavish carvings and friezes of all the animals, birds, and flowers of the island. One temple is built entirely around the motif of an exquisite old stone water-jar, covered with moss. Another tiny temple is enshrined in the very heart of a magnificent *banyan* tree on a forest road.

Temples with tiered roofs of thatch called *meroes* are for mountain gods. Often as many as seven or nine roofs are graduated in pagoda fashion,—seven or nine being a mystic number to the Balinese. The thatch is made of dried leaves of the *aren* palm called *idjuk*.

It would take months to see all the temples on the island. The temples of Sangsit, Taman Saei, Soekawati, Koeboetambahan, Gelgel, Tegal, and Penaran Agoeng are the most interesting.

Though each temple has its special characteristics, in general each is built within an outer rectangular court with two inner courts. In the first courtyard the *gamelan* is set up; and feasts take place here, too. The second court is the *Bale-agoeng* or council meeting-place. And the third inner court, the *djeron dewa*, is reserved for the shrines and altars. The whole temple is enclosed within high clay and brick walls pierced with imposing stone gates, or pairs of columns covered with jutting carvings of idols, animals, and flowers.



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No two temples are alike. Blankioe temple is known for its fine sculptured "covered gate" (*padoe raksa*) as is Tegal temple; Sempidi has a handsome "cleft" gate (*tjandi bentar*); Satria is built of bright red brick, and Kehen temple has Chinese plates embedded in its gateway. Each temple has its distinct feature.

Early in the morning of an offering day, the young people of Bali assemble their offerings, pick their flowers, and make ready for the feast.

One morning, we happened to be visiting a compound where the women were preparing their offerings for a festival. It takes the best part of a day to build one of the fancy cones of fruit. First, they hang a central bamboo pole with purple mangosteens, tying the stems of the fruit to the pole by cords of palm fibre. Over the fruit, they arrange coloured rice cakes and sugar waffles interlaced with bright flower heads. After the cone has been built up in the shape of a huge pineapple several feet high, it is topped with a crisp brown roast duck or chicken, pinned exactly on top like the last star on the Christmas tree! No wonder the gods shower blessings on Bali.

Then the beautiful cone is placed upon a bronze or carved wooden platter, sometimes on a red clay compote, and pin-wheels of leaves and flowers, and long tassels of fluttering palm leaf, are arranged as ornaments over the fruit.

The women pride themselves on their offerings—trying to outdo each other in the skilful combinations of coloured fruits and flowers. Nothing is too good for



these temple dainties. The earliest flowers of the dawn are picked and kept in cool water. The very hearts of young palm trees are selected for their white ribbon-like leaves for rosettes and tassels. And all the family silver and jewellery adorn the offerings for formal ceremonies.

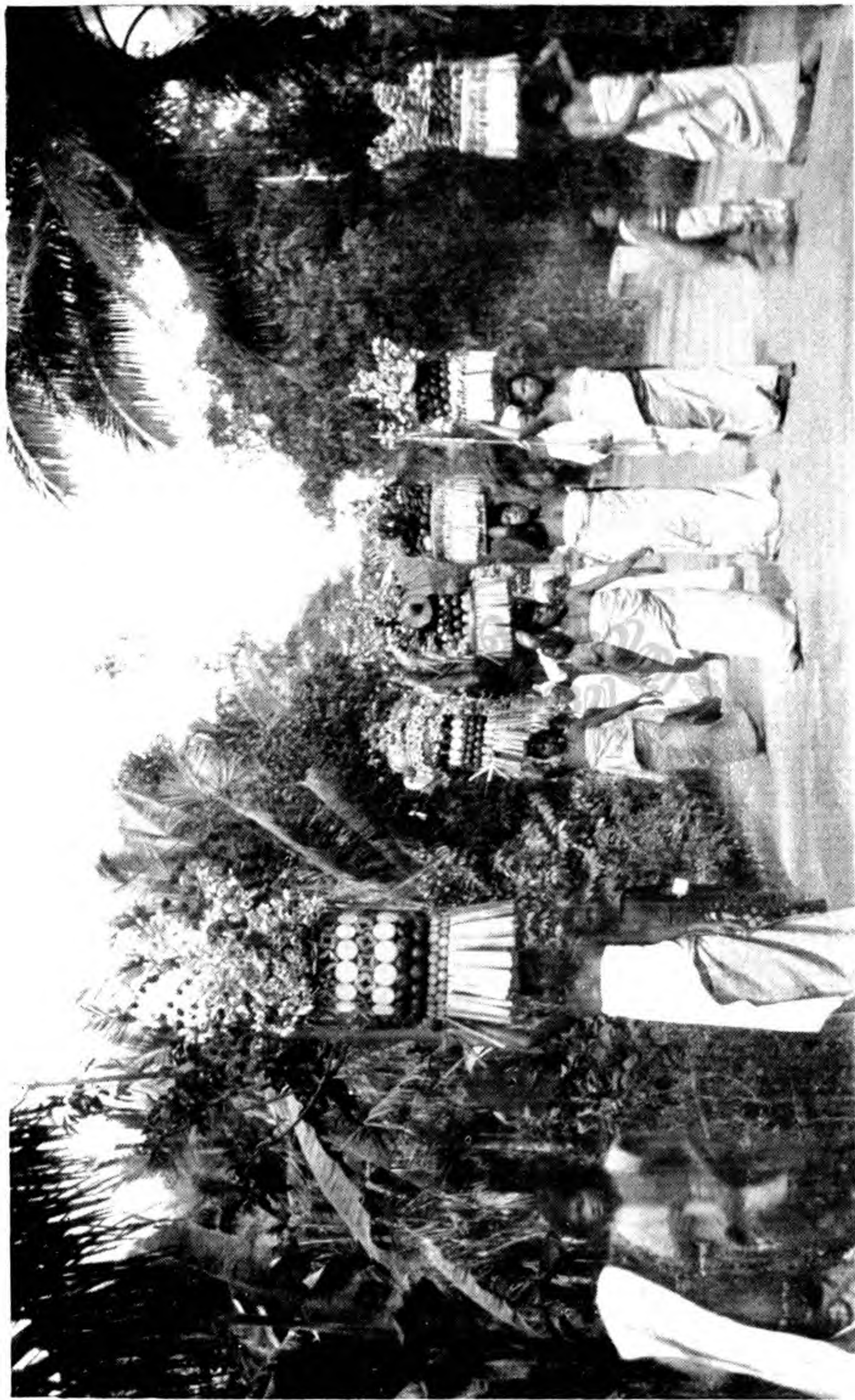
When the women are decked in their glittering *pradas* and all is in readiness, two men lift the heavy offering on to the head of the proud young woman who created it. Sometimes these offerings weigh as much as fifty pounds and they are often ten feet high. I have been told that these slender young women are able to carry such weight on their heads only by the hysterical power of fanaticism.

From all the lanes and byways these young goddesses form in a procession, proudly bearing their offerings, the ribbons of striped palm fluttering in the breeze as they glide along the roads, their jewels catching the glint of the sun. Pictures of such processions make all the world curious to see this enchanted isle.

The first sign of an offering about to take place is the posting of long white streamers on high bamboo poles above the temple walls. Then the pealing of the *gamelan* summons the worshippers to the temple.

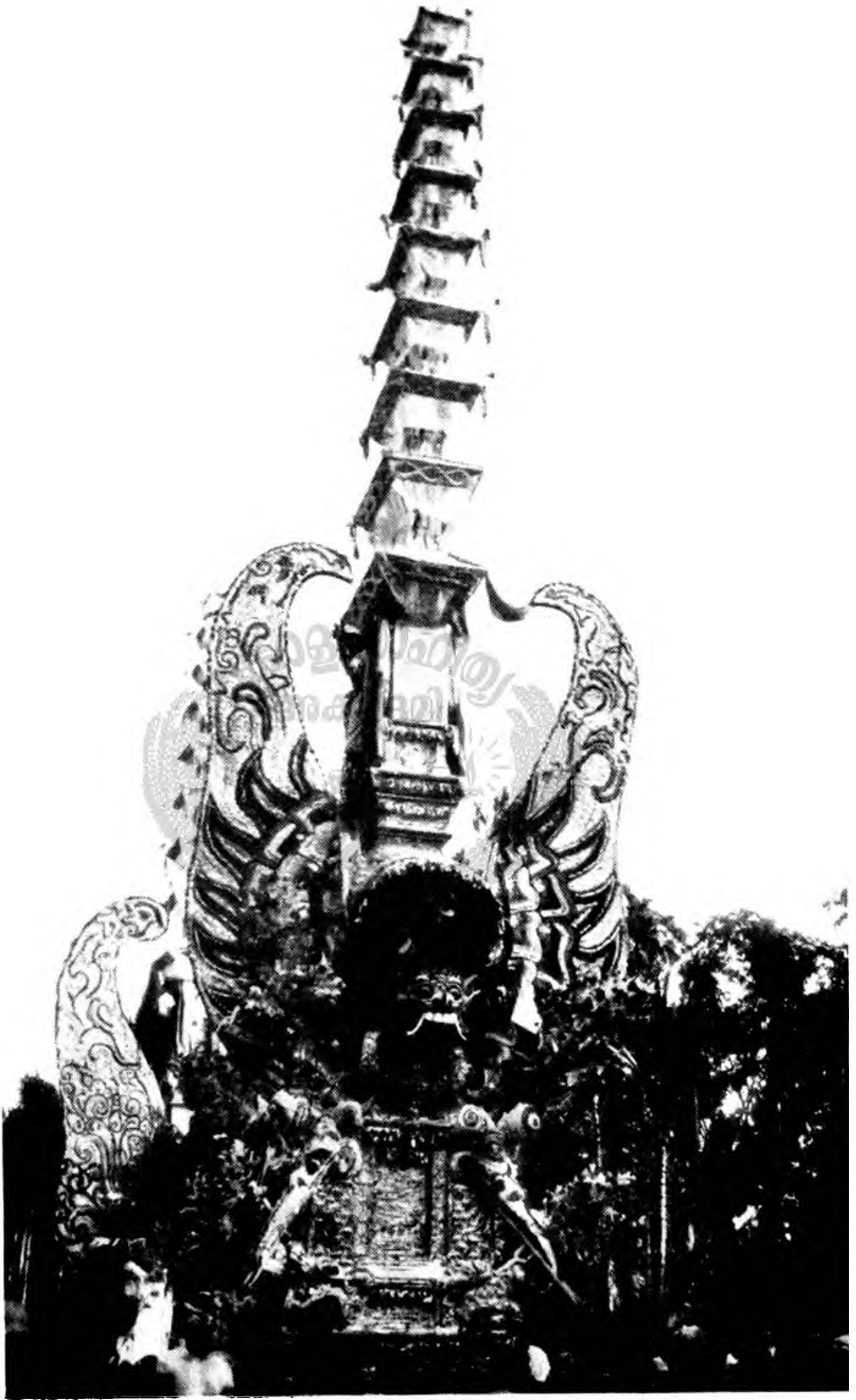
The women first file into the entrance yard of the temple and gather there to wait quietly until all are assembled. Then they make a procession and march slowly through the two courts to the inner shrine. All





Balinese maidens carrying their own decorated offerings to the temple. One of these giant pyramids of brightly arrayed fruit, grain, and sweet cakes, trimmed with bamboo fringe and flowers, often weighs over twenty pounds and is lifted on to the girl's head by two men.





Cremations often cost as much as \$20,000 (£5,000) in Bali, when all the countryside gathers for the long-awaited festival to usher the soul into Eternity. This is the *waddah* or tower in which the coffin is carried. The higher this *waddah*, the higher the rank of the dead. Eleven towers is the greatest height, reserved for royalty among the native priests and sultans.



the while the *gantha* (priest bell) is ringing, low and melodiously, and the sweet fragrance of offerings and incense fills the air. As the women kneel before the altar, the priests lift the offerings from their heads and arrange them about the shrine, until even the steps are heaped with the brilliant cones.

The whole temple is decorated with flowers and poles topped with streamers and feathers, and little round coloured umbrellas. Children bring the fancy "prayers" they have made themselves—gay fluted rosettes, which they stick along the edges of the thatched temple roof.

One of the oddest customs of certain temple celebrations is the tying of white bibs or aprons around the necks of the grotesque stone goblins who guard the gates. These idols—meant to scare away devils—are so ugly that they are really grotesque, with their wicked grinning faces, pop eyes, and knotted hair. The little white bibs tied under their chins add the last satirical touch to these *togogs*, as they are called.

I thought these stone idols were more mischievous than hideous; even the children are not frightened by their protruding teeth. In every temple, these fat little stone images, half-covered with moss, are posted under shady trees or hidden in the vines. Their sole object is to frighten away evil spirits, though ignorant travellers often think they are idols to be worshipped.

The temple priest, usually a pious-looking old man, dressed in white and leaning on a staff, is called a



*pedanda*. When all the people are assembled, he rings his *gantha* bell, and then the *gongs* crash, and every head is bent. The priest chants his *wedahs* and alternately dashes holy water over the audience and the offerings on the altar.

In the still night, deep in the forest, it is a scene to remember. The lovely young women with bowed heads decked in *frangipani*; their children kneeling beside them, quiet and devout; the exotic fragrance of flowers and fruit and incense; the moonlight flooding the forest . . . a night like this, remembered, seems a dream.

Such a night scene at the temple is only the beginning of an offering. In all, the ceremonies take three days. The first day, the women make their rice cakes, roasted fowls, and offerings; the second day, they take them to the temples at dusk, when the priest blesses the food. During that second night, the spirits are supposed to eat their fill of the food as it stands on the altar—and the priests have a feast themselves. Then the third evening, the *gamelan* peals a rejoicing summons, and the people return to the temples for the final thanksgiving service. It is then that the feast proper takes place; they eat as much as they can in the temple gardens, and take home what remains so that nothing is wasted.

A colourful Feast for the Gods is the *Galoengan* (All Souls Festival) marked by music, noise, and plays. Each house entrance is marked by a tall bamboo pole hung with a long flowered tassel or *lamak*.



## CHAPTER XIV

### "GAMELANS" AND "GONGS"

THROUGHOUT all the festivities of Bali, the *gamelans* and *gongs* lend their plaintive music. One may carry home a vivid picture of a night *Legong* dance, full of the mystery of these strange, eccentric people, but entangled with that vision will be the spell wrought by the wail of the *gamelans*.

There is no instrument in our modern orchestra to compare with the rare, hand-beaten bronze *gongs* of Bali. There's a haunting sadness in the minor refrain as their echo wavers over the hills. It is nearest to a xylophone, but most machine-made xylophones are sharp-toned and brassy sounding. Of course you have to hear the *gamelans* many times to learn to distinguish between the native tunes, and then half of their strange charm is in the background, the picturesque half-clad brown people who listen so intently.

Music is such a passion with the Balinese that every village has its own *gamelans* and *gongs*—musical societies—much as we have our symphonies. Each group is an organized club, with a leader and officers. They take their profession seriously and their rehearsals rigorously.

Because pictures of *gamelans* appear to be merely a series of bells arranged on a frame, don't think that it requires little skill to play them. Famous symphony



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conductors from foreign lands have spent months in Bali, attempting to learn the complicated time and rhythm of their music, trying to discover how the Balinese note is broken up into fourths and ninths and sixteenths. The music of the *gamelans* is the most difficult syncopation!

From the time the budding musician is four, he sits between his father's knees, learning to spank the big bells with the flat of his little hand in just the right way to retain the long, resonant waves of sound. Many mornings, going through the woods, I would see a little group of fathers and their sons, rehearsing. The little fellows would watch and listen, and then mimic their parents patiently. There was no laughing or mischief—this was serious business to these musicians of the future. They watch the *eyes* of their elders for signals as to when to take up the refrain! There is no other sign given, yet their co-ordination is perfect.

*Gamelan* music, though learned by native children, is by no means simple. There is no written notation; all the selections are oral and hereditary, remembered from one generation to another, though new symphonies are composed for new occasions and added to the repertoire.

The *gamelan*, which is less expensive and more popular in the smaller villages than the *gong*, is built on a long carved wooden frame, not unlike a couch. This frame is laced across with a network of thongs, on which the flat bronze discs,—ranging from small shallow bells of high flute-like tones to the wide deep



## ‘ ‘ G A M E L A N S ’ ’   A N D   ‘ ‘ G O N G S ’ ’

bells of low rumbling resonance,—are held in place. Some of the discs are curved, others are flat, giving different tone values.

The frames that hold both the *gamelans* and *gongs* are beautifully carved by hand, and then lacquered red and gold. Artists work for months carving the deep arabesques for their village *gamelan*. One handsome rack that I saw in Den Pasar had taken seven men seven months to make. When you consider that they receive not a penny for their labour, you can appreciate their love of music.

The tone of the *gongs* depends entirely on the way in which the bells are struck. For a full tone, the discs are struck clear and full with wooden sticks or small hammers. The ensuing perfect tone rings out far and wide, sometimes being heard a distance of five miles; its echo ripples on and on with a sweet melodious clang, like the lingering toll of a bell in an old church.

The slightest touch of the finger on the bell can halt the vibration instantly. Infinite variety of tone can be produced by having some of the wooden hammers bound with cloth, and playing sometimes with the sharp uncovered mallets and then with the soft padded hammers. The natives have evolved intricate little ways of muting the bells and of muffling the tone during different moods of a dance they may be interpreting.

The *gong* is an even more impressive orchestra; and it is far more costly to assemble, some of them running as high as a thousand *guilders*. *Gongs* are found only



in the larger communities like Den Pasar and Kloengkoeng. Larger orchestras are called Gamelan Gongs.

Selections for the *gong* are also long symphonies, carefully rehearsed and studied for weeks before a concert. After hearing one tune many times, I learned to recognize it from another tune, but it takes a certain length of time before your ear becomes "attuned" to the Oriental tone lengths. We would call their music "tone poems" because there is no distinct melody running through it, as in European music. It is a minor plaintive rhythmic syncopation, a weird percussion of Oriental sounds like no other music on earth. It requires the keenest ear to tell one "liquid" melody from another.

With the *gong*, as with the *gamelan*, the finesse of the player depends upon the accuracy of his striking the mallet upon the bells. It is possible to get four distinct tones from each drum, two by sharp staccato raps on the drum head, in the centre and near the edge; and two more sounds by beating on the parchment end, once with the opposite end covered with the left hand. This may give you some idea of what a complicated art it is to play the *gong*.

A *Gamelan Gong* orchestra is composed of several of the long *gamelan* racks, usually a bass instrument and a tenor (the latter has fewer bells); one or two *gongs* for emphasis; and often several other instruments, such as a drum (*kendang*), and a *bonan* or *ankong*, a *trompong*, *gangsa*, and various cymbals.

The *bonan* or *ankong* is rather like a harp with long



## ‘ ‘ G A M E L A N S ’ ’   A N D   ‘ ‘ G O N G S ’ ’

slender panels of metal instead of strings. It is of Javanese origin, but the Balinese often import them to accompany their larger orchestras.

The instruments are placed in square formation, and each is played by one man, sometimes two, sitting cross-legged on the ground before the bells. They play steadily on and on through the night, without tiring. When they play for a temple offering or ceremonial dance, they have no light except the full moon. I've heard it said that they know their bells so well they can play them in pitch darkness. There is no music to read, for none is written—all the compositions are memorized and handed down from father to son.

By the time all the *gamelans* have been assembled in the square, the opposite sides filled in with *gongs* and drums and cymbals, you have a formidable group requiring as many as fifty musicians.

When you see such an orchestra for the first time and await a thundering crash of heavy *gongs*, your ear is surprised and delighted at the thrilling ripple of soft metallic sound which showers the air with liquid music. It seems almost a magic music, so illusive to remember. A second after the tone has died away, you cannot recall it.



## CHAPTER XV

### BATS AND DEAD MEN

I HAD never quite believed the story about the "bats rushing out of a cave in a cloud so dark it drowned the sun," which our inventive Balinese chauffeur had told us. So late in the afternoon, when we were driving in the vicinity of the great Bats' Cave near Karang Asem, I suggested he show us this phenomenon.

Delighted, the youth turned the car around, and we flew over the roads to get to the cave before six o'clock,—the witching hour when the bats are said to fly out over the mortal world. The Goa Lawas has numerous little shrines and sacrificial altars, for it was once the famous meeting-place of the Kings of Bali.

As we stopped before the dark entrance of the cave, there issued a mysterious whirring sound like thousands of wings fanning the air. A pungent stench stifled the nostrils so we could hardly breathe. The soft whirring grew into a din, and suddenly a drove of soot-black fluttering creatures swept out of the cave, like a foreboding cloud. They didn't quite blacken the sky, but they made a good dark blot on the sunset. As they wheeled in gloomy circles, uttering weird crying noises, I could understand how the natives believe bats to be the reincarnation of evil spirits. I crouched down, in a hurry, at the sight of their ugly black "hooked"



feet, with the old primitive fear—that they might get tangled in my *hair*!

The next day we arrived in Kloengkoeng, the most popular of all Balinese cities, and the centre of the woodcarving and weaving industries.

There are two beautiful temples near there. Kerta Gosa has ceiling drawings depicting imaginary punishments in the Bali Hell. The temple of Gelgel has the highest *meroes* in Bali—a pagoda formation of thirteen thatched roofs. It is a pastoral retreat, so old that moss has covered the walls. There is only one modern touch—a pair of peeling mirrors in one of the little courts, evidently a present of the Dutch at some time. Kerta Gosa is an ancient Balinese court of justice adorned with Hindu drawings.

Giangar nearby is the ancient centre of the Javanese Buddhists who long ago invaded Bali. Hardly had we heard about the great influence these Buddhists had made in the religion of Bali, when we found several little clay *stupas* in a deserted temple yard. Inside each bell-shaped bit of clay, so old it fell to pieces when handled, there was a prayer inscribed in faded Sanscrit on a strip of yellow parchment.

In the days of long ago, when a Buddhist priest made a pilgrimage to this temple, he always wrote an original prayer and enclosed it in a ball of clay shaped like a bell, the symbol of Buddha. After these priests were driven out by a later invasion, this sanctuary holding the *stupas* was closed up. Now that the



temple has fallen into ruin, the clay "prayers" are scattered about and look like ordinary clods to the uninitiated eye.

What a plum for archaeologists !

There are so many startling things in this land that sometimes it was "occidentally modest" to pretend that we *didn't* see them. Everywhere about the temples, male genitals are incorporated into the designs—hardly a sight for maidens' eyes. Of course, India and Egypt use, as symbols of power and fertility, the phallus as their chief motif. One of the funniest things I heard in Bali was the native belief that the hanging of the organ of a crocodile or tiger over the bed ensures rejuvenation of the glands. Both the Javanese and Balinese believe in *goona goona* black magic, and they are highly superstitious about such things as eels, unborn tigers (or their hearts, teeth, and glands), pigs' heads, and snakes' skins.

The whole day was filled with sinister sights. It started with the early-morning announcement of an approaching cremation by the local priests. The air resounded with the clacking of hammers and the practising of the *gamelan*, in preparation for the greatest festivity of the year. Such signs of merriment over a cremation cannot but strike the stranger as barbaric and unnatural. But when the natives have waited several years for the right day on which to send off a beloved member to the Balinese Heaven, they are relieved and anxious for the event to take place.



One of the strangest experiences I had in Bali was the visit we made at Krobokan, to the home of a "mummy," a very nice, brilliantly wrapped mummy of a man who had been dead three years. The body had been housed in a special pavilion, the *bale band-oeng*, built near the home of the family of the deceased. We had to walk through a crowded compound, between little houses and down narrow paths, picking our way between dogs, pigs, babies, and roosters, before we reached our destination. As we entered the "low-bridged" entrance, a young boy was just in the act of placing an offering of food at the head of the coffin.

I questioned the native who accompanied us at the time, and who seemed well-versed in all Balinese traditions. "Who was the dead man? Tell us about him."

"Oh, this very honourable man—head of family. I think so his family very proud that he pass into heaven soon. You see, they put food by coffin three times every day, they put food and drink for the old man, and always somebody stay with him inside here, so he not be lonely,—in daytime, night-time, all time."

"You mean that someone actually sits up here in this room every night?" I asked, horrified at this filial duty of three years' duration.

"Oh, yes,—many neighbours come, make party. They sing, talk, tell story, make good time. Everybody bring feast, roast duck, cakes, good things. Oh! not sad at all." He was very matter-of-fact about it.

"But doesn't all this cost much money?"

"Oh, yes,—plenty. By time they pay for keep old



man three years, pay priest to make cremation day, pay for feasts and big burning show-off, it cost maybe many thousands *guilders*. But all relatives help. I think this man have many relatives—everybody in village, mostly. Sometimes hundreds of people help pay cremation—then everybody happy, he go to heaven, send good blessings back home.”

There was no evidence of sadness that the old man was about to depart on his final journey. The women of the house seemed proud of their dutiful care of the respected “old one.” Laughing, perhaps half-embarrassed, they took me inside and showed him off, with pride, touching with tender fingers the beautiful lengths of brocades that were hung over the bier. The half-dark interior was decorated with *kains* and rich fabrics. The favoured *krises* and ornaments of the old man were grouped about the room; and around the bier stood various-shaped bowls filled with offerings, fruit, and the yellow *kambodja* blossoms whose scent was so heavy that it made breathing difficult. A little platter held egg shells, betel-nuts, *gambir*, and tobacco, and a string of sixty-six *kopengs*, all symbols of comfort and plenty that were provided for the old man during his period of waiting.

The Balinese have a secret method of mummifying their dead, much as the Egyptians had. I suppose the dry tropical heat of both countries has something to do with the similar method of embalming the bodies.

First, the body is washed in a special ceremony, with



holy water perfumed with chopped *kambodja* blossoms and spices. Then it is dried and powdered with herbs, ground-rice meal, and a rosin from a certain tree. After a priest has been called in to officiate, the body is wrapped in its burial linen and laid upon an upside-down coffin, usually made of a hollowed-out sugar palm tree.

The special duty of the priest is to lay a gold ring on the dead man's tongue—so that when the spirit is reincarnated, the new being will be gifted with a soft-speaking voice. Next, a piece of iron and a flower are placed between the teeth, so that the new soul will have strong beautiful teeth. The bud of a lily is stuck in each nostril, perfumed wax in each ear, a piece of mirror is laid over each closed eye, and a slender leaf is placed over each eyebrow,—all in the interests of a well-formed nose, soft perfect ears, clear shining eyes, and arched brows, to ensure a beautiful body for the resurrected soul.

It is customary for a mummy's shelter to be marked with a white-and-gold painted balloon swinging from a post out in front. This is a signal to the spirit world that a soul is about to be released from the material world so that a welcome should be prepared.

Curiously enough, there was no noticeable odour in the house of the mummy that I visited. Of course, the mummy was already three years old. But they say that the Balinese method of preserving the bodies with lime and powdered herbs does away with practically all decay, except for a small drainage hole under the body. The liquid which collects in this, during



## BALI : ENCHANTED ISLE

the first month, must be carried away by the man's sons and thrown in the cemetery where his ashes will rest eventually.

When I came out of the mummy's pavilion, feeling strange and bewildered, as one always does on sudden contact with death, I found the natives calmly peeling *pomelos* and laughing and talking. They seemed to consider it a special honour when anyone came to visit the "old one," and they were delighted when I took pictures of the pavilion. I passed around a tin of English biscuits from our lunch basket, and we had quite a little party. And I'll wager that one of those biscuits was placed later on the offering plate beside the mummy!





## CHAPTER XVI

### CREMATION — THE FIERY ROAD TO THE BALINESE HEAVEN

THE greatest events in the life of the Balinese are the periodic cremations, when the bodies and mummies of several persons are burned together at a giant conflagration attended by villagers for miles around.

Everything about the proceedings of the cremation day seems strange and barbaric to our Western eyes. All we can do is to marvel at the rich symbolical significance of this medieval ceremony, and try to appreciate the exotic colourfulness of the custom. Owing to the beliefs and background of this Oriental race, their conception of death is entirely opposed to ours; it is an occasion for rejoicing rather than for sorrowing.

It seldom happens that the cremation takes place immediately after the death. The ordinary villager is temporarily buried the day he dies, his body first being washed and wrapped in a decent white burial sheet. He is interred in the village cemetery; and a small ditch is dug at the head of his grave to hold the offerings of food and flowers that the relatives bring.

By pushing down a bamboo pole near the head of the mound, the natives feel they have erected a slender connection between the body and the soul which is now floating around the earth in the shape of a devil. After the body is properly cremated, they believe that



the soul will be reincarnated into another human being. Actually, the hollow pole inserted in the ground helps to mummify the body by allowing the gases to escape to the surface. A few days before the cremation date, the body is taken up, and placed in an ornamented bier in a specially built tent or a *bale bandoeng*, near the family compound.

In the case of a member of royalty or a wealthy man, the procedure is much more elaborate. The body is never buried at all, but is kept for as long as three years, wrapped in costly linens and perfumed spices and rosin. The sacred bier is draped and festooned with gold and silver ornaments, *krises* and jewellery, fringed parasols, and brilliant lengths of cloth, and the loyalty of the family is shown by their continual presence beside the catafalque, throughout the day and night. And choicest offerings are always kept fresh in the coffin niche.

The day of the cremation is so important that the priests spend months computing the exact astrological time most appropriate for the reincarnation of the soul. The phase of the moon and the rainy season are also taken into account. The months chosen for cremations are usually the months between July and November.

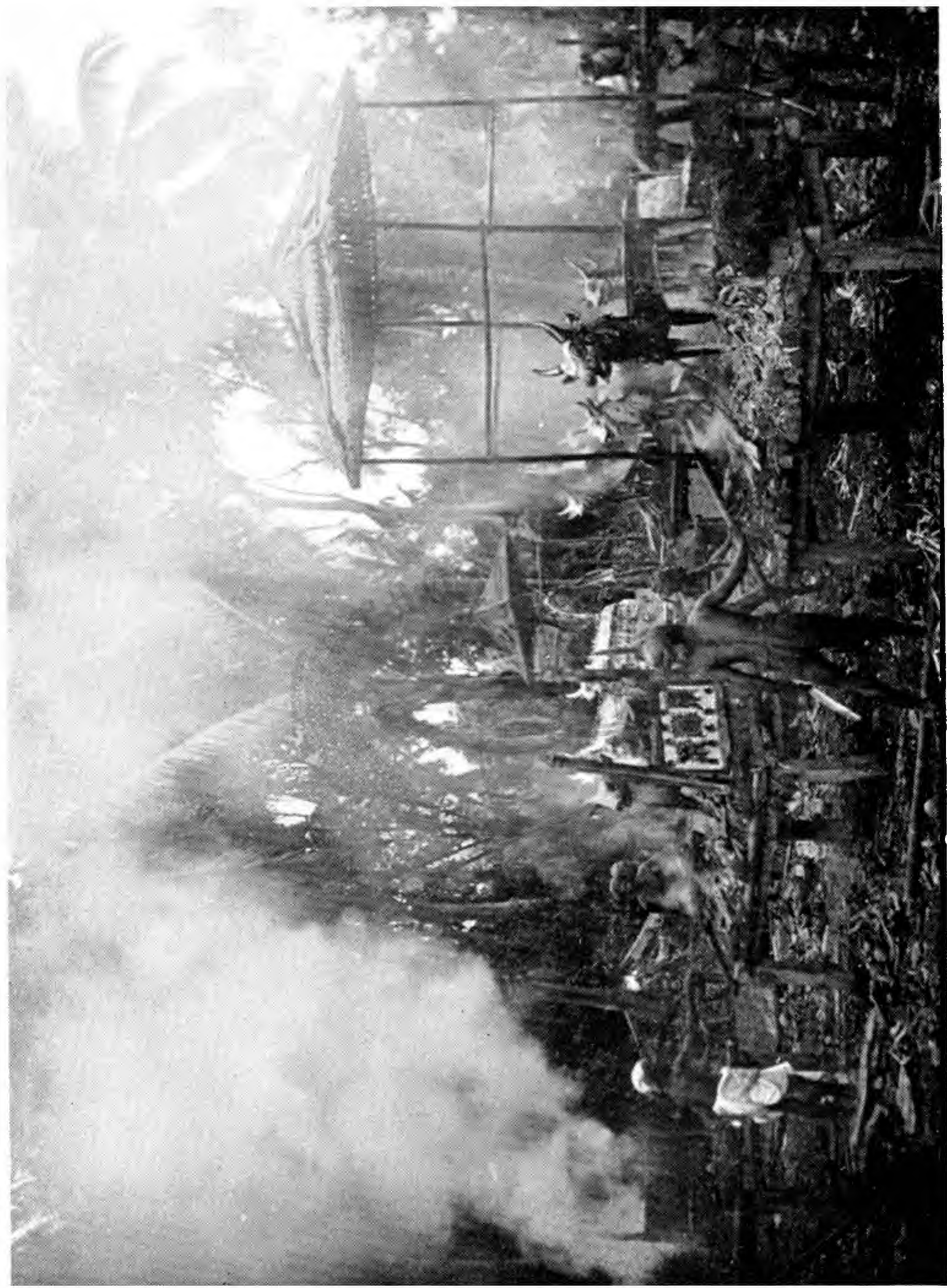
The expense of a cremation often runs into a considerable sum of money; a recent royal cremation is said to have cost thirty thousand *guilders*. But everyone in the village contributes a certain amount, either in silver or rice, the common commodity of the land.





The Balinese *patoelangan* (coffin) that bears the dead to the cremation ground is made in the wooden image of a bull (a sacred Hindu symbol). The back of the animal opens and the cloth-wound body is put inside and the whole thing burned in the great conflagration.





After months of preparation, the great Balinese cremations are held in a forest clearing near the sea. After the bodies are burned, at the end of the three-day festival, the families return and gather the ashes into a holy urn. Then the body-dust is scattered over the waves so that the last vestige of man may vanish from the earth and release the soul.



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Besides the question of expense, there are the numerous superstitions and beliefs to be considered. For instance, it is unpardonable for a young deceased member of a family to be cremated while his elders still live; he must not enter heaven before his turn. So his body must be kept until the death of the older relatives, and then a complete family cremation is held by the younger descendants.

When the day is finally named, great preparations are made for the celebration. A week previous, young boys and girls are chosen to form a procession to bring water from a distant well, reputed to be most pure and holy. Then the priests bless the water, and the family of the deceased pray at the temple to the oldest ancestor of the family tree.

For many moons, all the woodworkers and artists of the village have been busy making the *wadah*, the pyre, the coffin, and the funeral furniture. The *wadah* is a tall bamboo tower, like the pagoda roofs of the temples. In this way, the caste is designated by the number of tiers on the *wadah*. A member of a royal family or that of a priest is designated by seven or nine or eleven towers,—a higher number than the common people are allowed to use. The only person allowed the maximum number of roofs, eleven, was that of the old chief monarch of Bali, the Dewa Agoeng, the last King of Bali. That *wadah* took nearly a year to build. There are two or three *wadahs* at a large joint cremation, the most elaborate, of course, belonging to the oldest and highest born.



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When the *wadah* is finished, it is wound with bright streamers of cloth and bedecked with paper puppets, birds, red paper fringe, brass bangles, flowers, gold and silver paper designs, coloured glass insects, and the favoured tiny mirrors. A giant-sized *garoeda*, the magic bird of the god Ciwa, is made of carved wood and cloth, elaborately gilded and painted, and placed high up the *wadah's* structure. Above its pointed wings is a small cupola wherein the dead body is placed during its transit to the burning pyre. A long bamboo bridge or ladder is built on which the body is carried up to the *garoeda* bird on top of the *wadah*.

The funeral pyre is also made of bamboo; it is a smaller pyramid on which the carved coffin rests as it burns. This bamboo building is a delicate art, as the structures must be at once both strong and light in weight. After the small pyramid is ready, it is adorned with red and gold, with little mirrors sticking all over it, to catch the glow of the flames.

The coffin itself is carved of light wood in the form of a symbolical animal, a bull, tiger, lion (*singa*), sometimes a holy figure half fish and half elephant, called a *makura*. These animal coffins are called *patoelangans* and are of varying significance, according to the caste of the deceased. At the back of the wooden animal is a door which opens and through which the body is placed inside before the match is touched to the funeral pile below.

Three days before the cremation, all the villagers meet at the house of the deceased, bringing gifts of everything



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suitable for a cremation; hand-woven cloth to dress the *wadah*, platters of food, fruits, baked chickens, and jars of *arak* and palm wine for liquid refreshments. A very appropriate gift is a present of leaves from a certain tree, used for cremating.

Finally, the cremation day arrives, and great crowds from miles around gather for the feast and grand spectacle. The festivities start early in the morning to the joyful peals of the *gamelan*. Long lines of grass mats are arranged on the ground and set out with tempting dishes;—for the natives sit cross-legged on the ground as they dine.

After the wine has taken effect, everyone is in a hilarious mood to convey the soul to its heavenly release. Everyone must be happy and conscience-free, for this is one of the most important days in Bali.

Then a signal is given, followed by a sharp summons of the *gong*. The priests escort the crowd to the burial tent, where the body is taken up by a group of bearers. One *pedanda* holds aloft a huge *payung* or parasol, a prominent Hindu symbol, to shield the body from the rays of the sun.

On no account may the body be taken through the regular main gate of the courtyard to the *wadah*, evil spirits know the regular gateways too well; instead, a new gate is either made in the wall for this special occasion or, as oftener occurs, a bridge like a stile is built up over the wall.

The body is carried up the bamboo ladder to the niche in the *garoeda* near the top of the *wadah*. The



tower is then raised by the bearers to the accompaniment of a deafening roar of praying and chanting. It is lifted by two long bamboo poles and placed on the shoulders of several dozen men.

The head priest, arrayed in full vestments of white and gold, precedes the *wadah*, walking just ahead of the long line of relatives. The priest carries the head of a long cloth *naga* (snake), whose white tail is held above the heads of the family mourners. You can imagine what a startling spectacle a cremation procession is!

When the *wadah* is part way along the road to the burning pyre, the most amazing proceeding takes place. At a sign from the priest, the bearers suddenly act as if possessed by devils. They run a little way, and then turn the tower around swiftly and run back, pulling this way and that over the heads of the crowd. Shouting and yelling, they shunt the *wadah* or tower forward and backward. The whole crowd is hysterical by now, excited by much arak and feasting. Half-naked men, with their long hair flying, shout and dance along the road beside the *wadah*, their gleaming eyes and spasmodic actions testifying to their fanatic frenzy. This jig-saw progress is to puzzle the devil spirits who are trying to gain possession of the body and keep the soul from freedom.

In the pandemonium, the crowd raise their hands and shake their forefingers at the corpse, calling out messages to be delivered to their friends who have gone on to *Indraloka*, and also to send good fortune.



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At a royal cremation, a priest especially appointed by the family directs the "shunting" operations of the *wadah* by pulling the end of the thick white rope like a snake which is attached to the top of the *wadah*. This snake or *naga* represents the supreme god of the underworld. Everybody that can crowd near enough to this snake rope is supposed to derive a blessing by merely touching it, for the rope is held sacred.

It is a thick paper rope, wound with red and gold and green paper strips to resemble a snake. Before the body is burned, a priest pulls out a small bow and arrow and shoots four toy arrows into the snake's head at the end of the rope. Then the snake spirit is supposed to be dead and the rope is wound in a coil and placed inside the coffin to be burned with the body.

There's a fascinating old legend about the origin of the snake symbol. Long ago, a noted Prince had fallen away from belief in his own gods. He went so far as to ridicule a kind old *pedanda* for trying to reform him. The Prince said he could test the priest's powers. He put a goose in a well without the priest's knowledge, and then he called upon the priest to tell what animal he had put into the well. The priest said, "A snake," at which the Prince laughed and ordered the well to be opened. A monster snake rolled out! It coiled itself quickly and would have struck down the Prince had not the priest interfered. Of course, the Prince repented, and returned to his faith and all was forgiven. But ever since the priests have ordered that a symbolical snake be killed at the burning of every relative of that Prince.



There is a particular order in the cremation procession—first march a number of women, silver offerings on their heads; then come a file of *kris*-bearers, dressed in state; these are followed by another retinue of royally garbed women, each carrying a small pitcher of holy water brought from different temples of the district. Carrying this consecrated water to the cremation is regarded as a token of sympathy from all the people who live in the vicinity from which the water came. Then follow the half-naked pall-bearers, runners, and the hysterical crowd who fight off the evil spirits.

Only the most beautiful women are chosen to march in the procession. They wear the finest raiment of the temples, long *pradas* heavily appliquéd in gold and silver leaf in gorgeous flower designs. Upraised on their right hands, they carry red compotes and silver platters of offerings. As many as three hundred of these lovely young women carry gifts to the gods. They have chopped *kambodja* flowers and sandalwood bark into the holy water, which many of them carry on their heads. Still others carry offerings for the deceased;—food, drink, *durians*, melons, chickens, native sweet-meats, *sirih* and tobacco, jewellery, and particularly a piece of looking-glass so that the soul may see itself in its new guise.

Spectators from other villages join in the procession, and everyone marches slowly and proudly. The men, dressed in their wartime raiment, carry their best jewelled *kris*es and spears.

To end the procession, with the proper guard against



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evil spirits, a wicked cloth dragon follows the crowd, lopping its terrible wooden head back and forth, and dangling seven long leather tongues. Grotesque puppets of wood and straw wobble along, manipulated by boys; they represent "devils of the underworld" who will be thoroughly burned with the corpse.

When the funeral pyre is reached,—it is usually at a distance from the village, overlooking both water and land, if possible,—then the corpse is taken from the *wadah*.

The consecration of each body by the priests is an impressive ceremony. Countless little pitchers and earthen bowls of holy water are sprinkled over the dead, and then these empty vessels are dashed to the ground and broken to bits, in accordance with the Hindu ritual.

Then the body is placed within the wooden animal coffin on the bier. Now, at a signal of the priests, all the bearers of the *wadah* rush to the water nearby and jump in, so that they may be cleansed of all devils. The cremation cannot go on until all are purified. While they bathe, they sing at the tops of their voices. These are the praises for the dead; the higher they sing, the more they will be forgiven for whatever neglect they may have been guilty of during the lifetime of the deceased.

The time for the burning having at last come, small boys are ordered to climb the latticed sides of the *wadah*, and take down the costliest finery, the beautiful *kains* and mirror-sewn silks. They liberate the small



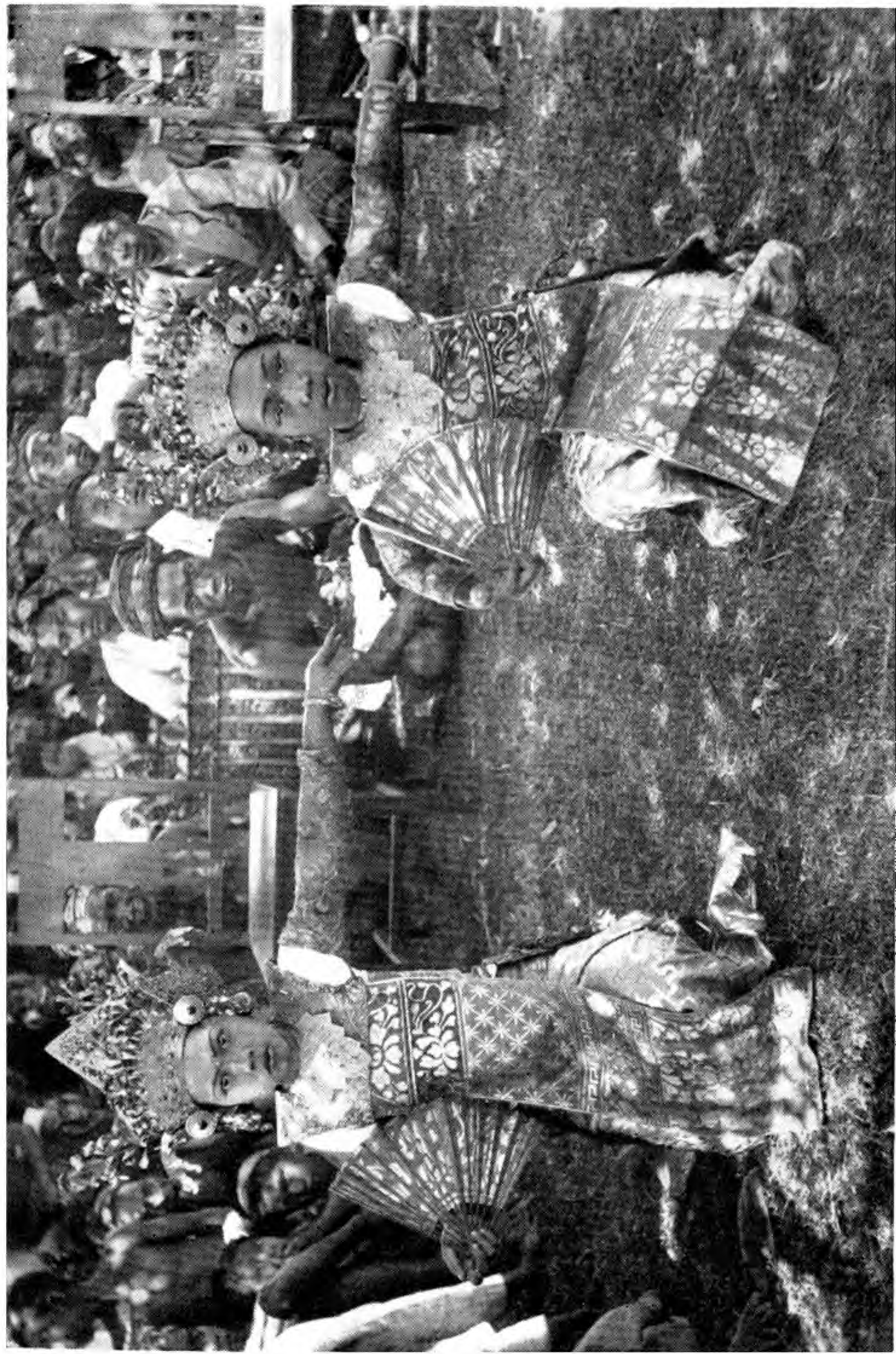
hen tied to the top of the tower to give the soul wings to fly away. The hen has fulfilled her duty and she may go free now that the body is to be liberated in the flames.

At last, with a touch of a small torch, the priests start the fire amid the mad cheering of the mob. The intricate bamboo *wadah* that has taken so long to build is lighted and flares up in a hiss of flames and a roar of sparks. It is dusk and the young moon is rising when the *wadah* is finally set ablaze, enveloping the surrounding forest in a fantastic red glow. The burning bamboo creaks and collapses in a burst of black smoke, while the coffin continues to burn a dull red.

No one thinks of leaving until the last red ember has died away. Then, happy and content, the crowd return to their homes, satisfied that everything possible has been done, and that the soul has flown away to heaven on a trail of fiery smoke.

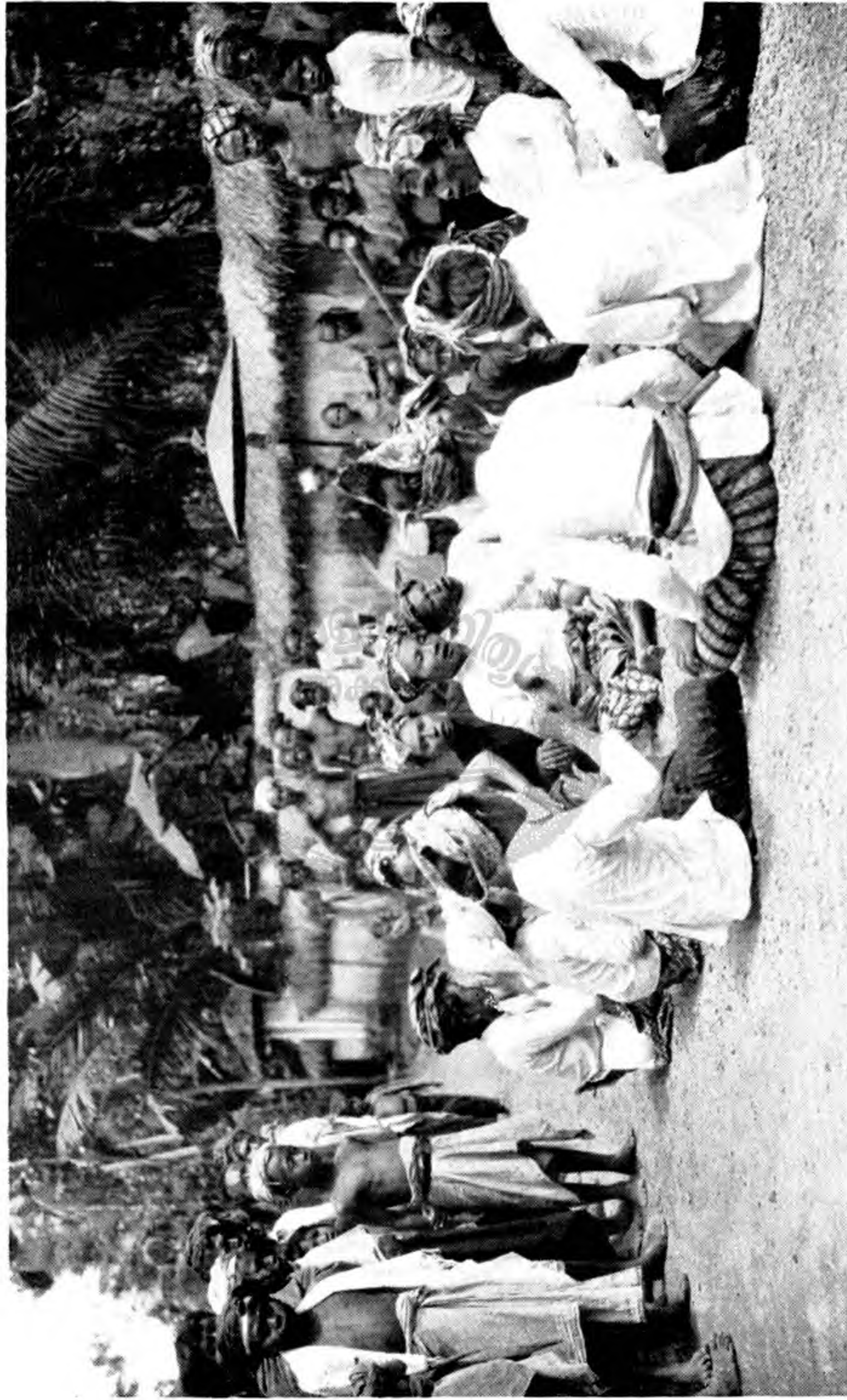
But as soon as the ashes are cold, the family members return and collect the ashes of their loved ones in small earthen bowls which they carry to the shore. There, in a solemn little gathering, chanting the family prayers, they sprinkle the ashes and throw handfuls of petals over the water, so that the last remaining mortal dust may vanish for ever from the earth.





Balinese temple dancers begin to study their fantastic postures at the age of 4, are at their best at 7, and are retired at 12. These little girls consider it a great honour to be chosen as temple dancers.





This is a Balinese ceremony that we might call a “sitting” dance. These *Djanger* dancers chant and sway faster and faster until they are hypnotized by their own rhythm. Notice the trance-like expression on their faces.



## CHAPTER XVII

### STRANGE DANCES OF BALI

THE fountain-head of Balinese art and the dance and the theatre is their rich heritage of mythology, folk-lore, and historical legend. The greatest of these historical legends are the Hindu *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, as the greatest of ours is the Bible. The characters of these legends appear again and again, in the sculptured figures of the temples, in the *wayangs*, and in the native dances. They represent the courageous gods and wicked demons who play such a large part in the everyday life of these superstitious people. These Hindu stories have been heard by the children from the cradle and naturally exert a forceful influence in the lives and art of the people.

At the age of four, children of graceful stature are chosen to train for dancing. Day after day they must practise patiently, holding tiring postures for long periods at a time to develop perfect poise. If you think ballet work is difficult, you should watch a class of little Balinese dancers! All the time they are learning to control their body muscles, they must learn *not* to use their facial muscles. The face must become merely a part of the design and costume, and seem as immobile and wooden as a statue. Even the eyes are supposed to assume a staring, inanimate glassiness.

The loveliest and youngest of Balinese maidens are chosen for the dances so that their grace and beauty



may be offered to the gods. The dances are usually performed in the temple gardens on moonlight nights. Set in such glamorous surroundings, these dances have become the inspiration of the people.

There are many types of dance in Bali, but the most classical is the historical *Legong* dance of small children aged six or seven. There are also an Incense-offering dance; a fanatic Sword dance; and the dance of the Witch or *Ranga*, which is held when any evil threatens the community.

Of late a new type of more modern dance has been originated by the younger crowd, called the *Djanger*. The dancers in unique costume, both young men and women, sit cross-legged in a circle on the ground. Their master dances a solo number in the centre, and the others follow, gyrating their bodies, shoulders, heads, and hands in accordance with his movements. Pantomime, comedy, hand-clapping, and bits of acting enliven these *Djanger* dances, and the natives seem to enjoy them more than any others.

One of the most extraordinary performances I saw I called the "sitting dance." It is often given by the Dutch hotel at Den Pasar for their visitors. Just at dusk, the dancer, usually a man, comes and sits cross-legged in the courtyard, while the *gamelan* plays an introduction. This sounds ordinary enough, and the visitors sit in prosaic Dutch chairs in the shadows and wait for the native to arise and dance.

But he only sits quietly with his eyes closed, a superb



## STRANGE DANCES OF BALI

figure of bronze muscle bared to the waist with a dark *sarong* around his hips. His *batik* head-cloth has an odd tab hanging over one ear.

The *gamelan* quiets down to a faint tattoo, but still the dancer sits with eyes closed, as if in a trance. The music beats a little faster, and the dancer rouses as from a long sleep and lifts his arms in quivering undulations like a snake about to pounce. He bends his shoulders down to his knees weaving in a circle as if caressing the ground. He extends his body, arching his neck like a cobra. Shudders run down your spine, as he quivers and darts like some gliding animal. He is no longer human, but some strange animal creeping out of the dark woods. This dance is difficult to describe,—watching it, one felt the vague motions of different animals. His long brown fingers, bent back, looked like claws, and trembled like little birds shivering before the onslaught of an enemy hidden in the leaves.

I found my whole body tense from watching, and the palms of my hands were wet. I have seen primitive dances in nearly every country of the world, but never was I more profoundly moved than when watching Marius of Bali in a “sitting” dance.

One night during the full moon, Mr. Caron arranged a special *Legong* dance for us. The *Legong* is the most classical of Hindu dances, based on the ancient posture type of dancing.

This night, the *Legong* was staged in a grove near the temple of Kesiman. We were given the place of



## BALI : ENCHANTED ISLE

honour on stiff-backed chairs near the *gamelan*. The bells played a prologue of silvery chords, until everyone was seated and all had grown quiet and expectant.

Then four little dancing girls appeared, swathed in golden cloth and with arched crowns of flowers on their heads. They glided into the centre of the torch-lit circle on bare feet, with quick catlike steps. They couldn't have been more than seven years old; yet their movements were artful and subtle and all the wisdom of India was in their postures.

The interesting coronets on their heads took my eye. I looked at one closely after the dance, and found it to be a bandeau of gilded and pierced leather. It was studded with mirrors and coloured bits of glass to reflect the light. After the crown was placed on the head, a cunning arrangement of coconut fibre was placed just at the back of the bandeau. Into this fibre were stuck rows of white flower buds on fine slender stems. As the dancer moved and swayed, the tiny flowers quivered like the wings of humming birds. It was a far more complicated headdress than one sees on any European dancer, and far more effective!

The *pradas* bound so tightly around their slender bodies were heavy with red and gold and silver threads. A gold-pierced leather belt with a huge buckle sparkled with rubies and emeralds. The make-up of the little dancers was fascinating,—the dead-white of the paint on their faces, and black *kohl* outlining their eyes.



## STRANGE DANCES OF BALI

As the dance opened, they poised on tiptoe, like butterflies. Then the *gongs* blared forth with a fearful bang, calling forth the spirits of the night. With stiff advancing gestures, the dancers moved forward, writhing their bodies up and down with fluttering movements of the wrists. They seemed to glide from side to side, without moving their feet. Not a flicker of expression changed their mask-like faces and lowered eyes.

The music increased in *tempo* and the dancers' movements became more liquid. Their barbaric syncopation filled the eyes and ears and soul of the audience. It seemed to call forth some deep primitive instinct. I kept wriggling my toes in my shoes, longing to break free and join these spirits of the woods and trees who had come alive for a moment. Every time I saw these dances in Bali, I had that same eerie feeling of living creatures of the woods reincarnated. These native people have the most inhuman movements: the fluid weaving of a snake, the quick darting of birds, the lithe pouncing of a tiger—all unmistakably imitated from the animals of the forests.

If you have ever seen a Siamese dance, you can recognize some of the same posturing movements in the Balinese dances. From their shoulders down the entire length of their bodies, the Balinese dancers strike an angular line, first posing to the right, then suddenly shifting to the left, with elbows akimbo. What fragile exquisite hands they have! Their fingers bending back almost touch the wrist. The little figures are changing



chameleons of colour, as the *gamelans* are changing patterns of sound.

"Don't these dancers ever grow tired?" I whispered to my companion.

"If they do, they never show it. That's part of the dance—they must never show the least flicker of emotion in their faces."

Their white faces were as imperturbable as stone. Sometimes I think the origin of the *Legong* was the idea of repeating the carved figures of the temple sculpture.

I can shut my eyes this minute and see those little golden dancers against the flare of the dying torches which lit up the forest in such weird shadows.

As it grew late, family groups slipped quietly away, carrying home the limp forms of sleeping children in their arms.

A dance that usually occurs at the temple late in the evening is the Incense dance. Here again the four dancers are small girls, swathed in rich metallic sheaths.

After a dead silence in the beginning, the bells resound in a slow sorrowful strain. The music seems to float on the night air. The scent of temple flowers is overpowering to the senses. In the background, tiny oil lamps flicker up on a low table. Before it, the smouldering incense pot sends up blue tendrils of pungent smoke.

The four child dancers kneel with passive closed eyes behind the oil lamps. They move their hands in weird sinuous motions above the incense, to the accompani-



## STRANGE DANCES OF BALI

ment of sing-song chanting. Their actions quicken, and they rise and move barefoot over the pebbly temple ground. The chanting grows louder, and the dancers whirl and dart like the winds of a tornado. Breaking away at last from the mystic spell, they swoon with undulating ecstasy and trembling. All the time their eyes are half closed and languorous. What enigmas are these mere babes!

The dance strikes up faster, the bells ring out, and the dancers begin anew twisting their bodies to even madder antics. The dance increases in momentum, until eventually one of the dancers falls in a faint to the ground.

The watchers, prepared, administer a quick reviving medicine and carry the dancer home. But the dance continues and the incense pots are replenished until dawn breaks in the sky, and the other three charmers are entirely exhausted.

Among other Balinese dances are the War dance, the *Topeng* masked comical dance, and *Baris*, a spectacular spear dance. One of the most fantastic is the *Barong-Ranga* when the she-witch *Ranga* struggles and is finally "devoured" by the terrible dragon *Barong*. Two men dancers support the mythical animal costume of the dragon, manipulating the wooden jaws of the hideous mask head.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### MONKEYS AND A WATER PALACE

TO-DAY, we drove to see one of the unexplainable wonders of Bali, an ancient Rock Monastery called Goenoeng Kawi, near Tampak-siring. As in most of these unique spots, it was set far back from the road and the "rushed tourist" travelling on schedule would probably miss it.

We left our car at the foot of the hill and had to walk single file along a narrow footpath, sometimes so steep that steps had been cut into the solid rock, and then down through rice fields where the footing dwindled to a ten-inch strip of ground. One little misstep and off we'd go, into the richly fertilized mud of a *sawah*. So we kept our eyes on our toes, so to speak.

Beyond the rice fields we turned into a split ravine—a great jagged opening in the earth which looked as if it might have been made by an earthquake at some time. The opening revealed a series of caves said to have been built by a race of people so old that no archaeologist has been able to fathom their exact period. Some think it is an old Hindu royal mausoleum.

The group of caves are skilfully cut into the bare rock, without any supporting beams whatever. Rude altars have been hewn out of solid rock slabs. The five niches in the walls must have held coffins at one time, presumably of a former King and his four consorts.



Archeologists studying the old stone formations and the rock cells for monks near by date these ruins from the eleventh century. One flat block of stone looked enough like an execution block for one's imagination to run riot. Baby lizards scuttled out of our way, and I felt as if I had invaded some forgotten chamber of the dead.

I took pictures of a strange rock relief called Tojo Poelo near Bedoeloe. It depicted a hunting scene—spearing wild boar—a section of sculptured panelling which jutted out from the earth under a tangle of vines and creepers. It was a perfect bit of sculpturing, with an Egyptian motif. A warrior on horseback held a shield of unmistakable Egyptian design. And a water-jar in the frieze was the same narrow-necked type that Isis might have carried. Even the helmet-like headdress and warrior's armour resembled those of the ancient Pharaohs.

There are several "sacred woods" in Bali; those inhabited by monkeys near Sangeh and the beautiful *banyan* forests of Bangli. These forests are the favourite market-places of the natives; they are cool and shady, and no foreigners interfere with their trading or cock fights. It is no wonder that they love these deep quiet woods, with lichens and fringed moss hanging from the branches. Their shaded avenues have the same tranquillity as the shadowy depths of some lofty cathedral at dusk. Immense black butterflies drift in the air and hover above the pale pink blossoms of *hedychium*, and the deep yellow of areca.



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The Sacred Wood near Sangeh is inhabited by a large population of monkeys. Because they live in the sacred trees, the monkeys are never molested, and the natives bring them handfuls of corn on market days. The monkeys have been treated so well that they've become quite tame.

It was great fun feeding them. The baby ones clung to their mothers' breasts. The old apes, the big males, were greedy for our corn, and came swaggering up and ate right out of our hands. But all the time they grumbled and scolded the others, warning them not to come too near these foolish-looking white-faced people. The mother monkeys, thinking first of their little ones, stayed well in the background for safety, but they looked so wistfully at the fistfuls the old apes were devouring that we tried to throw corn far back into the trees. But the big apes yelled furiously and dashed off to get the corn for themselves. I never saw such selfishness.

Yet the natives tell a cute story of the loyalty that exists among these monkeys. The forest is regarded as their preserve, and they are never harmed by the natives as long as they stay where they belong and do not pillage the fields. But one ugly old ape bethought himself of the tempting corn field of the natives just beyond the woods. He realized full well that the fat ears of corn were forbidden, but he was very greedy and fell into temptation one day. When he returned home, with a full tummy and puffed cheeks, the rest of the monkey village knew instantly where he had been. The whole crowd turned on him and gave him



the worst thumping of his life, and for days he stood in disgrace before the colony. Some native boys who happened to see the proceeding reported the story to their families, and it is said that no monkey of Sangeh ever strays into the corn field any more.

It was a perfect day to be in the woods. But then every day is glorious in Bali. Even the rains are lovely there. I've seen it rain like an overturned bath tub, but it's a warm rain that brings after it a fresh smell of earth and flowers. Immediately a shower is over, the sun comes out radiant, making rainbows on every drop-hung leaf. Long fronds of tree ferns turn silver with mist, and wild orchids burst open with velvet and chiffon petals. It's a sparkling faery place after a rain.

Off we went through the village lanes, shaded overhead with leafy boughs of tamarind. Little scenes of pastoral content flashed by on every side,—babies playing *au naturel* in the sun-flecked courtyards, their mothers sitting on the compound steps combing each other's hair, or picking red berries from the overhanging coffee branches. Sometimes an old fisherman, brown and hardy, walked past with a long silver fish hanging down his back. Women went by, carrying rice in big Chinese hats, their sleeping babies swinging from *slendangs* over their shoulders. We saw boys making paper kites that looked like moths or dragon-flies. Occasionally, the gaudy Ford buses chugged by importantly, and unloaded an amazing number of half-clad villagers in all sorts of costume. I never tired of watching the life of the village streets.



One afternoon we were invited to visit the water palace of the native Sultan of Karang Asem, whose name is Goesti Bagoes. He is the wealthiest of the native rulers, and to my surprise proved to be a thin elderly man, as quiet and dignified in his bearing and native costume as the round Rajah of Giangar was portly and pretentious.

After walking through many Balinese courtyards, we came upon the water palace,—a lovely white pavilion built on a tiny island in the centre of a graceful lake. It is one of the most artistic buildings I saw in Bali. Overhanging windows in the little palace looked out over lilies and flowers floating in the water. A long slender bridge led to the palace from the shore, and in every direction vistas had been skilfully arranged through arches and blossoming trees.

In this idyllic setting, the wise old Sultan of Karang Asem has retired with his native retinue. Looking out over the palms to the towering Peak of Bali, rising ten thousand feet into the sky, he may still dream that Bali is the land of native Princes. Here he studies and writes. He is reputed to be one of the cleverest of Balinese judges, and once wrote a book on Balinese laws, a copy of which is said to be in the New York Public Library.



## CHAPTER XIX

### MARKET DAYS

EVERY little village has its market day. For the occasional traveller on the island, these market days are always an adventure. That is the time to see the native life at its best—everyone is so busy buying or selling that he is too busy to notice strangers.

Whether it's a small market or a large one makes little difference. The whole countryside will be there, before improvised stalls covered with palm-thatched canopies. There's a flurry of barter and calling of wares that rivals a Baghdad street fair. It's as big a day in Bali as Saturday used to be in the small farming towns of our own country, when everybody went to town to buy and make merry.

Near Den Pasar, Kloengkoeng, Kintamani, and at a clearing in the forest near Bangli, I saw the best market displays. The best time to see them is early in the morning when the hours are cool and the fruit and flowers still fresh from the forest.

I arose at six one morning, along with a thousand or so natives, and walked several miles through the forest to see a big market gathering near Bangli. All along the footpaths through the trees, we saw young women carrying huge baskets heaped with vegetables, coconuts, and fruits that looked too heavy for one person to manage. But the coil of cloth wound in a circle and



placed under the basket on top of the head seemed to make the baskets fairly easy to manage.

The squeals of young porkers, the shouting of children, and the screaming of bright-plumaged birds overhead punctuated the early-morning calm of the forest. The piglets have good reason to squeal, for they are strung up by their feet between strong bamboo poles, and carried between two men. They are either sold alive at the market or reserved for a barbicue feast on the morrow.

All the family household seemed to wend its way to market. Young boys carried big bamboo cages with their favourite fighting cocks inside; for a market day always called for a cock fight as part of the festivities. Children carried armfuls of melons or bananas, or helped their mothers by carrying small panniers of rice or manioc roots upon their heads. But the best-looking of the men, I noticed, carried nothing at all except the flowers in their hair and the *krises* in their belts. The males are surely the pampered sex in Bali.

The winding road to Bangli passes through the darkest depths of forest shade where the light scarcely pierces and giant ferns grow high above one's head.

What a rich land this is,—of rice fields, coffee plantations, forests of teak, *lontar* palms, and the *kapok* trees from which our pillows are made. Fruit grows on every side,—mangos, *salaks*, oranges, bread-fruit, figs, pineapples, coconuts, pomegranates, bananas (of which there are over a hundred varieties!), limes, *durian*, the rose-fruited *pomelo*, and the purple mangosteen, most royal of all fruits.



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It is said that Queen Victoria had a passion for tropical fruit. The story is told that she had tasted nearly every fruit in the world but the mangosteen. Returning travellers had told her so much about the delicious flavour of the purple fruit that she ordered a box to be sent to England encased in ice, that she might taste its luscious nectar. But the fruit was far too fragile to stand the long ocean voyage; it was spoiled by the time the Queen received it. Poor woman, it might have prolonged her life if she had left the cares of State and had made a voyage to the beautiful land of the mangosteens and there partaken of them to her heart's desire.

In a deep cleft in the hills near Bangli is a marvellous panorama of the whole countryside below. From the height of 4,500 feet one looks down to the valley and lake. Off in the distance the splendid Batoer rises 5,700 feet in the air and spumes a thin spiral of smoke in the air as evidence of the cauldron boiling inside.

For over an hour we walked through the trees, meeting little family groups, the men smoking cigarettes, the women chewing betel-nut, and the children sucking at sticks of sugar cane.

How the natives love this road to Bangli in the daytime, but how they fear it at night. They rush home at the first sign of nightfall, cutting banana-stem torches to light the shadows and keep off the evil *Butas* who hides in the dark.

At last we arrived at the market, and dropped down to sit in the cool shade of a great *banyan* and watch



the vendors assemble their wares. Though the natives have no licence to sell up here in the woods, the whole procedure is very orderly and quiet. Everybody seems to have a certain place to set his basket, either in some shady spot on plaited mats, or on the portable stalls of bamboo.

There is a section for fruits and vegetables,—parched corn, potato-like tubers, and beans called *katjangs*. At a miniature “butcher’s shop,” the women buy their meat for the week. Nearby are chickens and hogs in little pens. And a stall of salted and dried fish, as well as baskets of glistening blue fish caught that morning and wrapped in green leaves. Women sit on little three-legged stools, or rest on their heels behind their piles of clay pots. One stall offers for sale nothing but *batiks* and fabrics for making *kains* and head-cloths.

All through the morning, the crowd weaves in and out, enjoying the contact with neighbours from various parts of the district. News is exchanged ; everybody stops to eat every little while, squatting on the ground with their lunch on a banana-leaf plate. Food is plentiful and cheap at the *warungs*, or little portable restaurant stalls. A whole plateful of rice and *sambals* (hot spice) with a meat and vegetables may be had for a *kopeng*,—a fraction of a Dutch cent. And that includes a helping of the popular Balinese pickled fish—what we might call *hors d’œuvre*. Another *kopeng* will buy a slice of roast spiced pork, or the *satis* of roasted young goat meat, so temptingly cooked on skewers over charcoal. Or a gourd of palm wine which regularly accompanies the



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native meal. How they love the highly coloured syrup drinks, too!

A large market (*pasar*) even has an "apothec" stall near the vegetables. Here most curious "soap buds" and bark and medicines are heaped in baskets. There are bright-coloured barks for dyeing, and jungle nuts rich with oil for frying certain foods. Good-luck charms, and every manner of native adornment dear to the heart of woman, may be found in the "drug stores" of the native markets of Bali.

There is none of the wrangling or argument about the buying so noticeable in China and India. Everybody accepts the prices without question. It seems to be understood that no one will be cheated. If there is an abundance of fruit in the forest, the price is low, and if fruit is scarce the price is accordingly high—and no one disputes it.

It's such a tranquil scene, and so colourful, that you could spend all day among the stalls, chatting with the natives, eating the luscious mangosteens and crisp brown *satis*. If you think native food is not delicious, just be game and try it—that's the proof of eating, anyway. I have never tasted food in Bali that was not wholesome and palatable even to our cultivated taste.

The high peak of the market's activity is reached around eleven o'clock. After midday everyone rests for a time, and then the afternoon starts off with a cock fight, in an open pavilion called a *wantilan*.



Officially, cock fighting is forbidden in Bali by the Dutch. But you might as well forbid small boys to play marbles. There have always been cock fights in Bali—the natives love the sport with a perfect passion, and I think there always will be cock fighting there.

Foreigners hardly realize the significance of the cock fight. Long ago, it originated as a Hindu custom because the strutting crowing cock seems to impersonate the arrogant devil spirit of *Butas*. When two cocks have fought to a finish, the dead rooster is offered up on the altar to appease the demon spirits. Even to-day, the Balinese believe that the best way to keep the evil spirits satisfied is by the occasional earthly sacrifice of a cock. *Bhrgoe* is lord of the cock fight.

A big cock fight is something to see. The best ones are said to be put on in Giangar. For many months, the young cocks are preened and fed the choicest kernals of white corn. They are taken out every day for a walk, with one leg tied to a piece of string. Their joints are anointed and massaged and the bird is carefully bedded in the finest yellow straw. The shadiest spot in the courtyard of the compound is reserved for the cock baskets.

The day of the event, the whole countryside gathers and heavy bets are placed. Sometimes as much as two hundred *guilders* are placed on a favourite cock. The birds are removed from their cages and a slender fighting "steel," rubbed with oil, is tied to the right spur of each cock. When the two birds are shoved unceremoniously at each other to arouse their fighting blood, the battle is on.



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These trained cocks are such terrific fighters that a battle seldom lasts longer than ten minutes. But what an exciting ten minutes, for the natives! Mercifully, the well-aimed thrusts of the armoured spurs end the weaker cock in short order. The survivor is removed from the arena at once, and regaled on choicest palm wine; while the dead cock, giving up his ghost to the wicked *Butas*, has served his purpose in life.

Every season has its sports in Bali. During the spring, men and boys make fancy long-tailed kites resembling birds and dragons and butterflies. Heavy bets are made on the highest-flying kite. Other excitements are a cricket race and a cricket fight, when two huge black crickets in a bamboo cylinder are excited by tickling with a feather. All through the year there are pigeon-flying contests, rice-bird training, Hindu oxen races, spear-throwing contests, and strange games that are nearly as old as Time. The Balinese men are stout sportsmen at heart and go through the painful teeth-filing ceremony or bring home a giant turtle for a feast, with equal ease.

No matter when you go to Bali, you are certain of witnessing some of these colourful Hindu sports—there seem to be so many games, festivals, dances, races, contests, séances, and so on, that no two travellers ever see the same things.



## CHAPTER XX

### WITCH ORGIES AND MASK PLAYS

ALL of the Balinese dances are symbolical, the remains of the old barbaric rituals of Hinduism. The religious zeal of these people mounts at times to primitive fanaticism. Their fiendish self-inflicted torture dances are evidence of the strange unchanged customs of Bali—so definitely different from the world we know. The cosmopolitan traveller must realize the vast difference of customs in the Oriental races, and not judge what appears weird and repulsive without trying to see through Eastern eyes.

One of the most popular of these symbolical dances is the Sword dance. It is performed by a man dancer, dressed only in a brilliant loin cloth. All the hair is shorn from his head and he dances with a long broad sword in his right hand.

This Sword dance is supposed to encourage bravery in the people, and to scare away the devils who hang around the villages. It is usually danced in a temple with a priest officiating—offering prayers and holy water—to make the dancer's results more "potent." Women and children circle around the dancer, singing and sprinkling flowers over his head.

For a time he stands motionless as if under a spell. Then when the incense and holy water appear to have revived him, his muscles begin to twitch. As if possessed,



he throws himself into a vicious whirling dance. He swings his long sharp sword in slashing curves and whipping circles, perilously close around his body. It seems that with the slightest deviation, he would surely nick off an elbow. But such a calamity never happens, for the priests have thoroughly blessed this dancer with holy water. He is working in conjunction with the good spirits to frighten out the devils of cowardice among the people.

A barbaric Balinese dance is that called the *Ranga*, a witch dance given occasionally to strengthen the people's courage in flouting evil.

I had heard about one of these horrible séances going on behind the closed doors of a small temple near where I was staying. I had heard too much about it to care to see it. Half-clothed natives intentionally work themselves into an emotional frenzy by imbibing *arak*. To watch them whirling until they fainted in the close hot confines of a small room packed with natives did not appeal to me.

At the height of their fanatic contortions, they are said to whip out small *kris*es, or long pins and other instruments of torture. They gouge their flesh, pull their hair, and prick their bodies until the blood runs. Then the onlookers rush up and drink the blood,—but this is too terrible even to tell. I only wish that I did not have to say it is true. Though strictly forbidden by Dutch authorities, these medieval customs are carried on to-day in Bali—behind closed doors, of course.



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Another fascinating dance, not so horrible to see, is that of the oracle, called a *balian* or *permade*, when danced by a native woman inspired with religion and palm wine. Male prophets are called *basirs*. The superstitious natives believe that a special few of their number are possessed of the power to become disassociated from the material world, and to wander at will in the spirit world. They think that such a person may have been a god in some previous incarnation.

In every village, near the temple altar, there is supposed to live an invisible mediator between man and the gods. This spirit, called *Bajero Taksu*, dwells in a niche or a wooden shrine. On the night of a new moon, the people gather together in the temple near this shrine. In a weird dance they beseech their *permade* to commune with the spirit mediator and answer the perplexing questions of the people.

The crowd kneels in the deepest prayer, until the *permade* is possessed of the spirit. The sign that she is invaded by the higher power is given when she begins to tremble with spasmodic jerks along the spine. Suddenly, the priestess leaps to her feet and stands with wide-open staring eyes, as if hypnotized.

The more courageous of the crowd around her rise and ask a question. By her gestures they interpret what the spirit answers. The questions are generally about petty disagreements, love affairs, jealousy, motherhood, and so on. These *permades*, under the influence of Shamanism, often display amazing powers of prophecy. This hypnotism is rumoured to be



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artificially induced by strong music, and by copious imbibing of the powerful *arak* and generous doses of hasheesh.

This séance, as I call it, lasts until the moon sets, when the people disperse to their homes, content that they have had a glimpse into the future. No wonder there seems a kind of magic about the moonlight of Bali when such things take place.

While these barbaric dances have a great hold on the people's mystical nature, they are equally fond of their light-hearted pantomime, *wayang wongs*, *wayang goleks*, the *topeng*, the *Ardja*, and other plays.

All performances of the Balinese drama, whether the favourite shadow plays or the pantomime of masked actors, are based on the stories of the *Ramayana*. They are not difficult to follow since the pantomime plays as important a part as the dialogue. In many cases, the story is secondary to the acting.

Every village has its own theatrical clubs. The actors use thin, carved wooden masks painted to represent every kind of animal and character. *Bhima* is a comic idol with curled moustachios, bulging eyes, and teeth of mother-of-pearl. Arjuna is a handsome hero with elongated nose and winged shoulders. The audience recognize their characters as easily as our children do the figures in *Alice in Wonderland*. All of their play-acting is as theatrical and far-from-natural as their dances are.

No admission charge is ever made at the dances, séances, or entertainments in Bali. All the natives that



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are talented take part and all are invited as spectators. As in their living and working, so with their play—it is all on a “community-enjoyment” basis. Visiting guests, however, can make the graceful gesture by offering a gratuity toward the upkeep of the temples.





## CHAPTER XXI

### BRIEF HISTORY OF BALI

VERY little is known about the very beginning of Bali. The first records say that around 700 the overflow of Hindus from India invaded the island. Until 1500, it was held as an Indo-Javanese colony. Then in 1518, at the fall of Madjapahit, the last of the Mohammedan rulers in Java, many more of the Javanese fled to Bali and intermingled with the pure Hindu race that had dwelt there in peace since the seventh century. Invaders brought their religion with them,—Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. To-day, the resultant Balinese religion is a mixture of these three, with Nature-worship or Animism thrown in, as a result of the luxuriant tropical surroundings.

Because Bali was inaccessible to world commerce, owing to its lack of good ports, its mountainous character, and other difficulties of communication, it was overlooked by the Occidental races.

In 1804, the Dutch took possession of the island, but they held it in name only. Those early Dutchmen went rushing home with hair-raising tales of a terrible race of fighting natives who resented intrusion with a flock of poisoned arrows. Nearly a hundred years later, the Dutch finally became masters of Bali. They brought larger forces, and when the natives found they could not compete with gunpowder, they gave up the fight



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and went back to their rice fields. After adjustment and a few bitter experiences, the Dutch found the natives were really a peaceful and artistic race. They arranged a system of Home Rule allowing the native Rajahs certain rights, and thus they regained the confidence of the Balinese. To-day, the island is the pride of the Dutch East Indies, and peace reigns throughout.

The Dutch are wise colonists, and in the case of Bali they have encouraged the continuance of the old customs. Only such barbaric rituals as *suttee*, killing-by-*kris*, and torture-inflicting séances, etc., are forbidden.

*Suttee*—burning of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres—has not existed in Bali since 1903, when the widow of the Rajah of Tabanan threw herself on the burning bier.

Neither is there *purdah* in Bali—the seclusion of women behind the bars of the husband's harem, as practised in India. Nor do the hideous child marriages exist in Bali. The Hindu caste system has become so lax that it is largely a matter of form, reserved for temple ceremonies.

To-day, the Dutch are taking every measure to preserve the island in its original state. Old rites and ceremonies are encouraged. Ruined temples that have been neglected after earthquakes are built up again under orders of the Controllers.

Bali is wisely supervised by a Head Resident who



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lives in the Government House in Singaradja, the northern capital. Under his jurisdiction, he has appointed efficient men of long experience in dealing with the Balinese as Controllers. These Controllers are stationed at various strategic sections of the island, at Tabanan, Nagara, Giangar, Kloengkoeng, and Karang Asem. They are all educated men of superior rank, chosen for their posts by their skill in learning the Balinese language, arts, and customs.

The last of the native Sultans and palaces are kept up with all the pomp and ceremony of the old days. But there are few Rajahs left. Bali once boasted an aristocracy among the most race-proud in the world. In former years, the *Dewa* Agoeng at Kloengkoeng was the Prince-Paramount of Bali, but with the Dutch occupancy, his actual power dwindled till he became a mere figurehead. The Sultan of Karang Asem and the Rajah of Giangar are the last of the remaining Princes.

The Dutch have made few actual changes in the island, aside from building good roads and safe bridges, and introducing a few new methods of agriculture. Native schools are supported, but commercial contact with the outside world is not encouraged.

Though the Dutch are wise and gentle in their ruling of the Balinese to-day, they made many blunders in their early dealings with these native people they so little understood.

The worst disaster occurred in 1904, when a small Chinese trading schooner happened to be wrecked on



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the rocks near the south coast of Bali. Some of the goods which were cast upon the shore were naturally salvaged by the natives. The Chinese, hearing of this, complained vigorously to the Dutch authorities, saying the Balinese had stolen his merchandise, to the amount of five thousand *guilders*. He made the bold request that the whole sum be refunded to him by the native Prince of Bali.

The natives, who had never taken more than a few boxes of salvage, which they offered to return, felt they were being tricked and refused to pay. They asked instead for a fair trial before the Dutch court. For some unknown reason, the Dutch Government refused the trial, blockaded the coast unexpectedly, and declared war on the natives. All over a schooner wreck which might have happened anywhere.

For two years there was bickering warfare on both sides. Then Sourabaya, Java, took over the offensive, sent real soldiers with ammunition across the straits to the little island, and war was on in earnest.

The natives, who had nothing but bows and arrows to fight with, were taken unawares. They soon saw the futility of trying to stand ground against armed soldiers, so they simply left the battlefield and returned to their rice planting. The Dutch soldiers then hurled bombs into the peaceful palm-shaded villages to stir up their wrath and *make* them fight. The patient natives, refusing to shed blood among their numbers, went on with their farming. The troops stalked about, seizing whatever they fancied without any intervention.

When the soldiers did not leave, the "wise men" of



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the Prince's royal palace had a secret meeting. Then they made a pact, and decided it would be more honourable to die than to be taken prisoners and perhaps be killed or transferred to some alien land. The native "procession of honour" which followed is known in Balinese history as the *Poepoetan*.

The next day, when the Dutch troops advanced on the Prince's palace, prepared to loot and pillage, they were met by a startling spectacle. A procession of men and women and councillors, dressed in their best, greeted the advancing troops. The chief courtiers and councillors, garbed in red and black, with their long hair streaming, led the parade; and in their raised right hands, they carried their jewelled *kris*s. The loveliest of the young women followed next, decked in flowers, and wearing the white robes symbolic of death. Beside them, holding their hands, walked the little children of the royal families. All of them walked with proud faces joyful at their sacrifice. And in their very midst the Prince himself was carried in his golden chair raised upon the shoulders of four of his loyal ministers. The village priests in their vestments directed the procession.

At a given signal, a bamboo rifle was shot off. The Dutch, thinking they were to have a surprise attack, fired into the crowd. Numbers of the natives fell, but much to the surprise of the soldiers they did not resist or make any move to attack.

Then the troops saw the strangest sight. A white-robed priest in the midst of the crowd raised his *kris* and, with cool accuracy, struck it into the breasts of



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women and children about him. When a soldier shot the priest down, others took up the massacre. Flames shooting up from the palace showed that the natives had set fire to all their possessions.

The soldiers, now understanding the sacrifice, stood puzzled and refused to fire.

The frenzied women, many of them wounded and dying, rushed upon the soldiers, and throwing their gold jewellery at their feet screamed at them, "Here is the gold you came for." Tearing open their white garments, they bared their breasts and dared the soldiers to shoot them.

The whole royal household and their loyal followers lay in a swelter of maimed and dying. Here and there in the crumpled mass a mother lunged a quick blow at her own child. Even the children refused to be saved by the Dutch soldiers, but begged and sobbed to be *krised* with the others.

The Prince was the first to die. The natives of the villages who had silently witnessed the spectacle returned to their homes to mourn what the gods had willed.

Of such proud heroic stock are the descendants of Bali!



## CHAPTER XXII

### KINTAMANI AND FAREWELL

How time rushes along, even in this enchanted land where clocks are a rarity. My days in Bali were numbered and I had reserved Kintamani in the mountains for my last venture.

Late one afternoon my Controller friend called for me at Kloengkoeng Inn and we started off towards the mountains in his roadster.

As we sped along, I caught glimpses of bright blue within the walls of a roadside temple. We stopped; it was a temple called Poera Kehen. To my astonishment, I found the blue colour was from *plates* that the natives had used as designs in their clay walls. On investigation, the old blue-and-white porcelain proved to be genuine Chinese pottery of the Ming dynasty—far more valuable than the natives ever dreamed. How did those plates ever get to Bali? It was typically Balinese,—that the natives should use these lovely blue plates that had somehow fallen into their hands for their temple walls.

Near Koeboetambahan, the road branched off and soon we were climbing upward toward Kintamani. Through my travels in the lowlands of Bali, I had become accustomed to the lush verdure and fertility,—the flowering trees everywhere, the emerald green of the rice paddies, the abundance of “pocket kerchief” lakes.



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I had almost forgotten that the island is predominantly mountainous. The highest peak, the Peak of Bali, called by the natives Goenoeng Agoeng, rises in the south-east end of the island to a height of 10,400 feet. The Peak of Tabanan is 7,290 feet in altitude, while the fiery old volcano, the Batoer, soars 5,280 feet into the sky.

Bali is such a small island that few people realize what a variety of scenery it offers. The three big peaks are a part of the long range of mountains that form the spine of Java ; yet these majestic mountain-tops are far enough apart so that they do not encrouch on each other.

Once there must have been many active volcanoes in that precipitous pile, but to-day the Batoer is the only active crater left in Bali. I wanted to have a look at this ferocious old monster that is said to have swallowed so many fertile villages. This sleeping inferno has twenty-one craters. In 1926 it erupted unexpectedly and disrupted the whole Kintamani area.

As we climbed higher and higher, we could see the verdure of the lowlands drop away before the bleak wastes and cindered mountain-sides of the volcano.

With each rise in the road, it grew colder. I could hardly believe we were in the tropical isle of Bali. I shivered in my thin silk dress. But, luckily, I had a woolly sweater which I dug out of my travelling case.

By five o'clock, we had arrived at Kintamani, ready for a cup of hot tea. I had asked the Resident jokingly to have the Batoer in good condition so that I could see



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the smoke and hear the demon rumble. But for once my wishes were ignored—low fog banks enshrouded the peak in moving swirls of menacing grey and white.

Still feeling chilly, I went to my room in the attractive Kintamani Inn, to change into warmer clothing. Ho! there were glass windows, and blankets, and a fire on the hearth. Even hot toddies were in order, if you asked for them.

But the outlook from my window was anything but cheery,—a depressing wilderness of black cinders and murky fog. Of course, the calendar might have had something to do with it. It happened to be my birthday and at home that's usually a day for celebrating. I had visions of the cake mother used to make. When your plate was upside down on the table, that meant there was a present under it. I believe I was a little homesick.

But if I will be a traveller and will go traipsing off to tropical islands, I must shake off sentiment. I took out a warm heavy coat that smelled faintly of cedar chips, and went for a walk into the village with my Dutch friend. Though it was hardly six o'clock, the lanes were thick with fog, and our breath made little clouds of white against the grey gloom and the black sentinels of trees on both sides.

Presently we caught the most tantalizing whiff of roasting meat. And shortly afterwards we came upon a little group of natives huddled over pots of fire beside the road. Skewers of young goat meat bits were browning temptingly over the coals. The need for food makes all the world kin. We squatted down beside the



natives and ordered a quarto of *satis* apiece. Four seemed a lot, with dinner only an hour away. But nothing under heaven can smell so good as roasting *satis* on a cold foggy night. As the tender gobbets roasted and sputtered over the glowing charcoal, the *sati* man sprinkled them with a mixture of coconut oil, hot pepper, and Chinese *soyu*.

I've since made *satis* at home in my own kitchen, and they were very good, but I think it is quite impossible for them ever to taste as good as they did that frosty night at Kintamani,—when we ate them in our fingers, sitting on our heels in the firelight among the natives. Smacking our lips and licking our fingers, we finished every bite and went on our way, scorning the cold of Kintamani. Variety is the spice of life—even in Paradise.

We walked to the native village and back before dinner. When the *mandoer* finally announced "*makan*," and we entered the dining-room with its long old-fashioned table, at my place was one of the real surprises of the whole trip. A splendid frosted birthday cake; bedecked with candied cherries and little candles! I could hardly believe my eyes! A note with the cake informed me that my dear friend, Madame Caron, had somehow found out the date of my birthday. She had made the cake with her own hands, and sent it carefully wrapped inside a tin box. A messenger had brought it all the way from Singaradja. A silly lump came into my throat,—but I can't remember when I had a greater thrill over a birthday cake.



## KINTAMANI AND FAREWELL

It was fun, inviting all the guests of the *pasangrahan* to join in cutting the cake. Our host opened a bottle of wine for good cheer, and I had a festive dinner that night, seven thousand miles from home.

A crackling fire burnt in the big Dutch fireplace, and for an hour we sat around after dinner, drinking cordials and talking of the famous legends of the Batoer. Of how, long ago, the natives used to sacrifice the most beautiful virgin every year, throwing her into the crater to appease the wrath of the devil who lived within.

An interesting incident occurred that night. A slender Balinese lad came up to the Controller, and dropping on his knees asked permission to state his case. On receiving consent, he unbuttoned his jacket and, exposing his bony chest, pleaded to be allowed to return to Kloengkoeng, his native birthplace, where it is warmer. What a passion the natives have for their own villages! This chap had been sent to Kintamani for a time as punishment for some misdemeanour, probably for cock fighting. There could hardly be a greater punishment for a Balinese than to banish him for a time to another section of the island; even a village at the other end of the island seems an exile at the other end of the earth to him. The kindly Controller, feeling, I suppose, that the boy had suffered isolation long enough, gave him permission. I believe I was as pleased as the boy when I heard that he might return to his beloved Kloengkoeng.



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The room had grown so warm from the firelight that I felt drowsy. I picked up my coat and stepped out into the gravelled courtyard. The moon had come out full and clear. Where a few hours ago the mountain had been lost in fog, now it stood out clear in the crisp starlight night. Below, the whole valley was blue, touched with high-lights and shadows, and dotted with the red stars of native fires. Every trail of fog had disappeared. And the swooping heights of the volcano rose silver and crystal in the moonlight.

I felt a deep quiet all about; the stillness I had learned to *feel*, in Bali.

"It might be nice to drive," offered my friend. It was exactly the right thing to do on such a night. We got white woollen blankets from the *mandoer* and, draping them over our shoulders like knights of old, went forth to explore the mountain in a high-powered American roadster!

The roads were like glass. We dipped into chill valleys, climbed steep grades, and whirled around narrow corners where the road dropped a mile straight *down*! It was a thrilling ride!

"Might as well review my prisoners, while we're so near. The only jail in Bali is here in Kintamani," said my friend, who had many official duties in life besides entertaining lady journalists. Indeed, he looked very military in his peaked cap and the white blanket thrown over his shoulder like a regal cape.

"Prisoners? In this idyllic land? I don't believe it!"

The car swung into a circular courtyard, where a



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lone attendant guarded the gates of what looked more like a sketchy building of shingles than a prison. The guard advanced to meet us, carrying a tiny lantern in which sputtered a stub of a candle. An animated conversation in Balinese ensued and we were shown inside.

About twenty prisoners appeared for roll-call. Their only punishment was isolation for a time. But how miserable the wretches were, away from the peaceful life of their own villages. They looked anything but vicious, huddled about the courtyard, ill-accustomed to the shivering heights of Kintamani.

How they must have longed to be back in the lowlands, where the music of the *gamelan* called from the temples on a full-moon night like this. Poor things, I could not help but think how much better off they'd be with their own native courts to manage their punishment, as in the olden days.

The prisoners were ordered to form a circle in the courtyard. A low table and chair were brought up, and the lantern set upon the table. The Controller called off the roll of names from a big book. Sitting there, draped in white, he made a striking picture as the candle sputtered and flickered. I sat in the shadows and watched, feeling I was awake in a dream.

All around him the natives, clutching their blankets around them, sat on their heels on the ground, a study in types as old as the world. As the Controller called out each name, he phrased the question, "*Apa ito?*" ("What are you in for?")

Almost invariably, the answer was "*Mati*" ("Mur-



der”), either for “love” or “jealousy.” Once the prisoner answered calmly, “Killed my mother-in-law for interfering in my household.” The same old reasons and the same old instincts. These people are primitive and childlike in their emotions. They are easy-going and seldom flare up in anger, but when they do, they literally “see red” and go temporarily insane. That’s why they sometimes kill, without realizing what they are doing; and then afterwards they live a strange, frightened existence, and often lose their minds. But murder is a rare occurrence, considering the million population of Bali.

The next morning was calm and clear, and I could have walked up to the crater and dipped out a cup of lava, as tourists love to do, but the cindered path is hard to walk and takes stout boots and stout endurance. There were so many things to see that I missed this experience and have always regretted it.

But time and cargo boats wait for no woman. I was sailing at noon for the Celebes. The natives had found out I was leaving, and, by the time I had finished my breakfast, the courtyard of the inn was filled with peddler women and their wares. Peddlers have an uncanny way of knowing the things you secretly admire among their treasures; the day you are sailing, they always bring the articles back at a lowered price, and, regardless of how poverty-stricken you are, you buy them—or ever after grieve that you did not.

My bursting cases were filled with silver bowls from Patimah’s, little coffee spoons with *wayangs* for handles,



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buffalo-hide fans, and a whole family of masks with "personal" names, *batik kains* and *slendangs*, woven scarves, and a pair of jewelled *krises*, Balinese calendars, puppets—diabolic and seraphic—my ugly little *togog* (idol) named "Ju-Ju" and many bits of odd jewellery.

But I had coveted an enormous thumb ring made for a priest that one of the old peddlers had shown me several times. It was of the crudest gold, set with an uncut ruby, and she offered it so reasonably that I promptly succumbed, without bargaining.

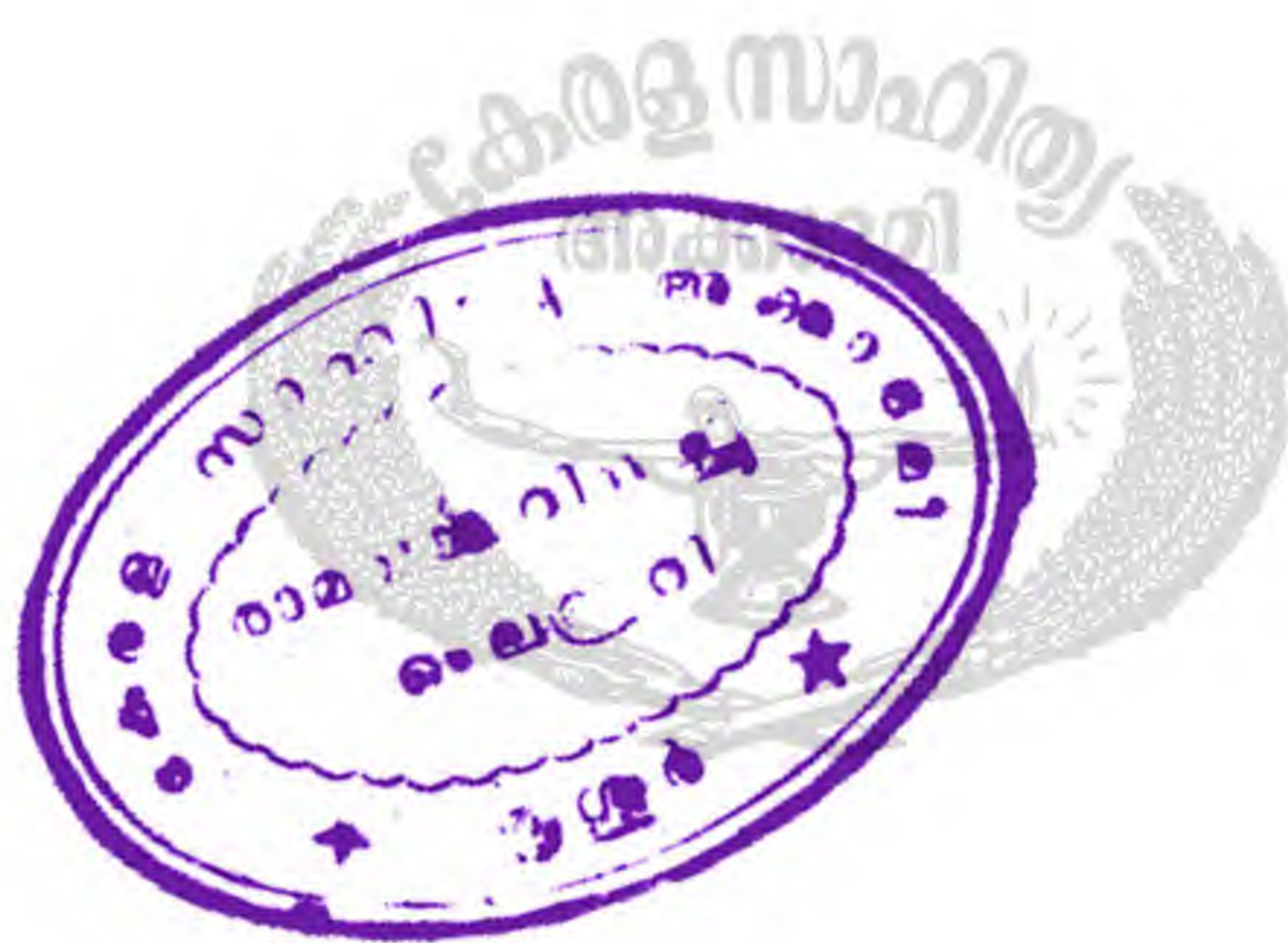
Even after so short a stay in Kintamani, I was sad to leave the place,—the calm of the blue hills, the utter peace of the little inn overlooking the shadow-wreathed valleys. I shall always remember the peace of that morning—the damp-smelling freshness of the earth, with nothing to break the stillness but the far echo of the *gamelan* bells.

By nine o'clock, we had dipped down into the green lowlands again. All too soon I was leaning over the rail waving good-bye to the friendly Carons, and to Patimah, who had rushed up with presents of *pomelos* and mangos. . . .

I looked back from the little cargo ship, as Bali faded away, a speck of white beach and leaning palms in the blue-green sea.

Farewell, Bali—*Enchanted Isle!*







## A D D E N D A

It is difficult to write about Bali. One has to see the island to understand its peace and tranquillity and exotic tropical atmosphere. Even the lucky travellers who visit it seldom have time to remain long enough to study the mystery of Balinese life. If they can stay a month or two, they may learn a great deal about the customs, of course. But even if they were to live in Bali a long time, they would not fathom the secret inner life of the natives. In the first place, the Balinese language is a very difficult and complex tongue which takes years to master; and as there are no text-books except in Dutch, this is an added difficulty, unless you're an accomplished linguist. And granted you learn the Balinese language, you must still become a Hindu *really* to understand—for there's an ancient ritual behind even the most casual blessing of the rice fields. But why understand, anyway? The mystery of Bali is its strongest appeal. It is privilege enough that we are still able to visit this stronghold of a forgotten culture.

Two weeks in Bali give the traveller a picture of this idyllic isle of mythical people. That is time enough to make impressions that will last a lifetime, and fill one's memory with glowing pictures to recall on less happy days. As in all travelling, the more you read and bring to a country in the way of study and interest, the more you carry away in experience and understanding.



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A very good tour, covering the most interesting points of the island, may be made by motoring from Singaradja south-west to Tabanan and Den Pasar; then to Tampak-siring and Kloengkoeng in the south; from there travelling east along the splendid coast road to Karang Asem,—this stretch is a magnificent scenic highway offering one panorama after another of tropical forest and lake vistas. The round trip may be arranged to include beautiful Kintamani in the hills, after which you turn north again to Singaradja and the port of Boeleleng.

The Dutch Official Tourist Bureau at Singaradja keeps a complete list of native festivals for each year, and by writing ahead, you may find out what events are scheduled for the time of your visit.

Each month of the dry season, during the full moon, there is a continual round of entertainments, dances, shadow plays, and temple ceremonies. So the new visitor should certainly hunt up an almanac and be sure of a full moon during the time he is visiting Bali, if he would see the island at its beautiful best.

The best months in which to see cremations are the dry months of late summer, during August, September, October, and November, when there is little rain.

Bali's New Year (*Menjepi*) occurs every two hundred and ten days. Last year it fell on January 7th, which was the occasion of a big celebration. This took place



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at Poera Watoe Kaoe, near Wongaja. After the first few days, the festivities continued at Gelgel, where programmes of cock fights attracted villagers for miles around. On January 17th, a great feast was held at Tirtha Empoel, near Tampak-siring, the seat of one of the holy pools so revered by the natives. At Kloengkoeng, on the same date, a large *Prang Dewa* (fight of the gods) took place around five o'clock in the afternoon. In the evening, a *kris* dance was held at Sempidi, near Den Pasar. The following day, the festivities continued at a small island of Serangan, where an impressive temple offering was held, and a country-wide feast which lasted all day. Another large *kris* dance took place the following week at Kesiman. This New Year programme is one of the most interesting of Balinese festivals, and should be remembered by travellers who plan to visit the island during January.

In the mountain regions, there are several lovely lakes set in far more alluring scenery than one finds in the European Alps. Especially sacred with the natives are the Danau (lake) Boejan, Danau Tamblingan, and the Danau Bratan, to which they make colourful pilgrimages at certain times of the year. Hidden shrines to the *Danau Dewi* (goddess of the lake) are set into the banks along these lakes. As they are rather difficult of access to travellers, they have to be reached by horseback, or by a shady climb on foot. But good roads are under construction through this beautiful lake country and soon the picturesque old shrines may be reached



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by a pleasant motor drive through the steep mountains.

So many people have asked me for a recipe of a simplified *rijsttafel* that I am giving here my own method of preparing it which was given to me by a Dutch friend in Java. If you have visited the tropics and relish a good spiced curry, you may enjoy this recipe which I have never yet seen printed in any cookery book.

Brown one finely chopped onion in fat; then add the cut-up boned pieces of a young chicken (or cubes of tender beef, veal, or lamb) and brown as well. Add one tablespoon of fresh curry powder (Crosse and Blackwell's will do, though I brought my own curry home with me from the Indies), one pint of water, the milk of one large coconut, a leaf of thyme and bay and marjoram, a clove, a branch of celery, parsley, the rind of half a lemon, and half a teaspoon of saffron (to make it a good yellow). Season with one teaspoon of salt, and half a teaspoon of white pepper, mix well, cover the pan, and cook very slowly for an hour. Remove the meat to a separate dish, strain out spices, and put the yellow gravy into a bowl with a ladle. If it has boiled down too much, add a little hot water or broth.

Have ready some hot steaming rice, boiled in the Oriental way. Serve a large helping of the fluffy rice in wide soup plates. Pass the chicken, or meat; follow it with the bowl of curry gravy. Then pass a large compartment dish (or many small dishes) of the



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following condiments that suit your fancy and convenience:—Hard-boiled eggs, cut in eighths and covered with a little gravy mixed with some finely chopped red peppers; the chicken giblets which have been slowly boiled in broth, and then marinated in French dressing; India chutney; shredded omelette; fried peanuts (or roasted in oil in the oven); finely ground coconut meat, browned carefully in the top of the oven; and lastly, a typical native dish of cooked cucumber cubes, served in a peppery sauce that you must season to suit your taste. All of these condiments should be served with their own small spoon or fork, and passed at the table so that each guest may heap them over his helping of rice. There are many other accompaniments, such as *fricadel* a hot spiced meat loaf, *satis*, etc., but this makes a complicated meal for the European kitchen.

The final delicacies are *krupok* and beer, which I cannot tell you how to make. Some of the importing shops now sell *krupok* in tins; it is easy to prepare, and makes a wonderful appetizer with cold beer. Now all you need are guests who thoroughly appreciate a real curry!

This is not meant to be a guide-book but I hope it may tempt you to go forth and “adventure” for yourself in Bali as I did.

Because the native spelling is confusing, I have purposely used the Dutch spelling as far as possible. All maps and road signs are printed in Dutch throughout the Island.



## BALI: ENCHANTED ISLE

I wish to express my deep gratitude here to my kind friends, the former Resident of Bali, the Hon. L. Caron and his charming wife, and Mr. N. Van Zalinge and Mr. D. A. Vonk of the K.P.M. Line, Miss Edith Luttman, and many others who have been of great help in making this book possible.





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